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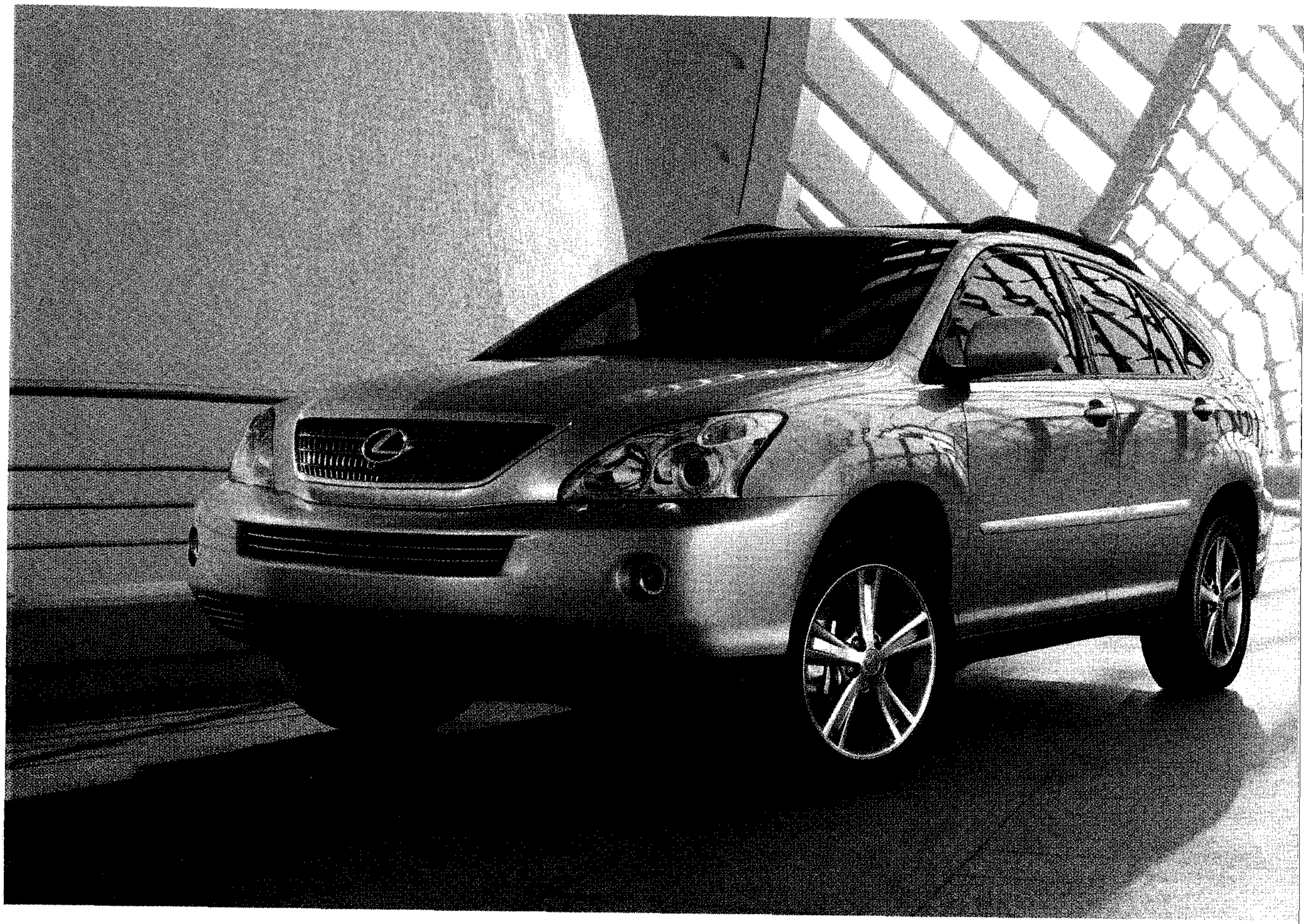

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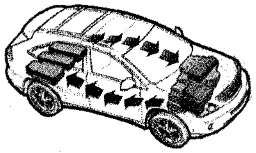

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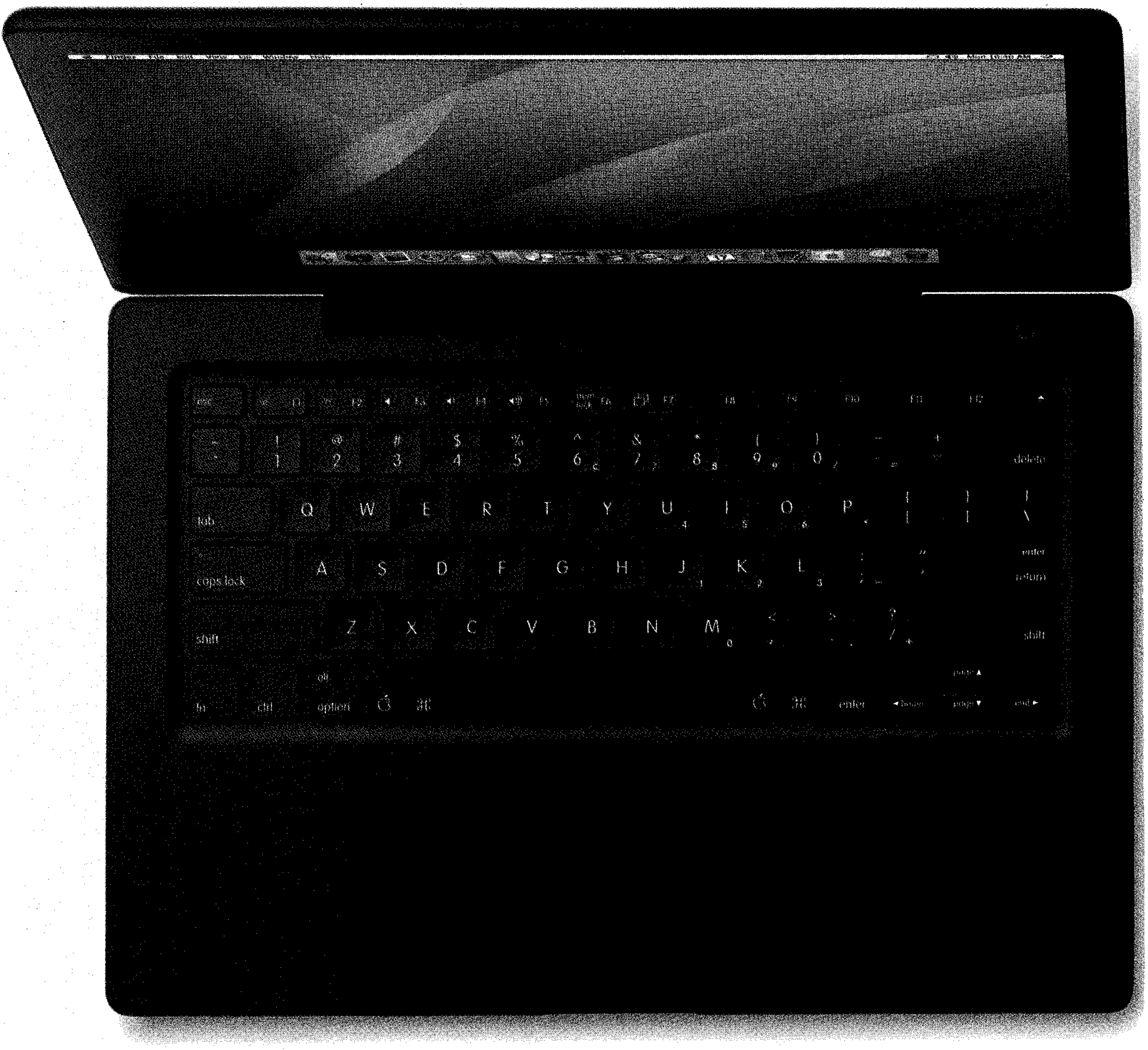

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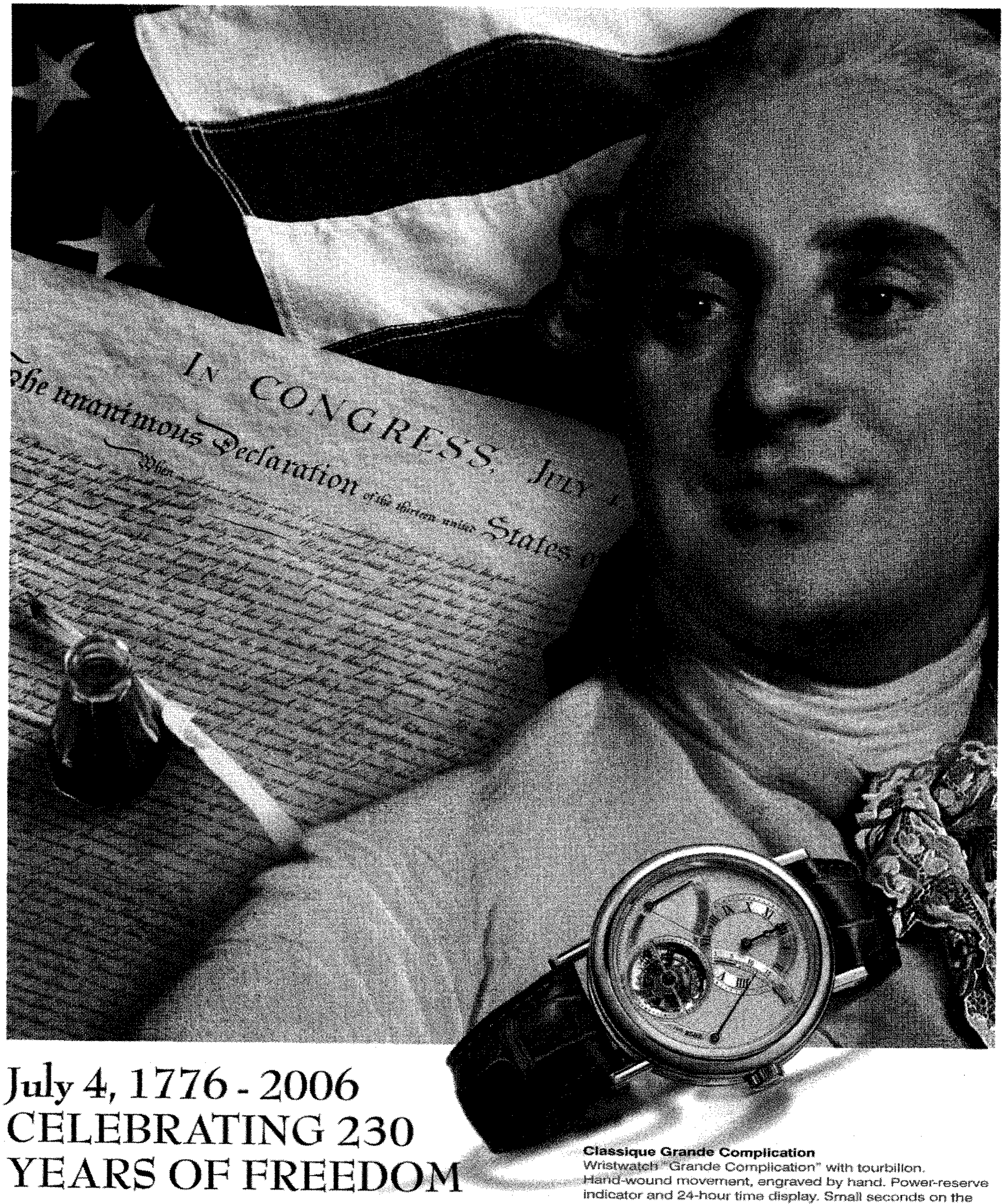

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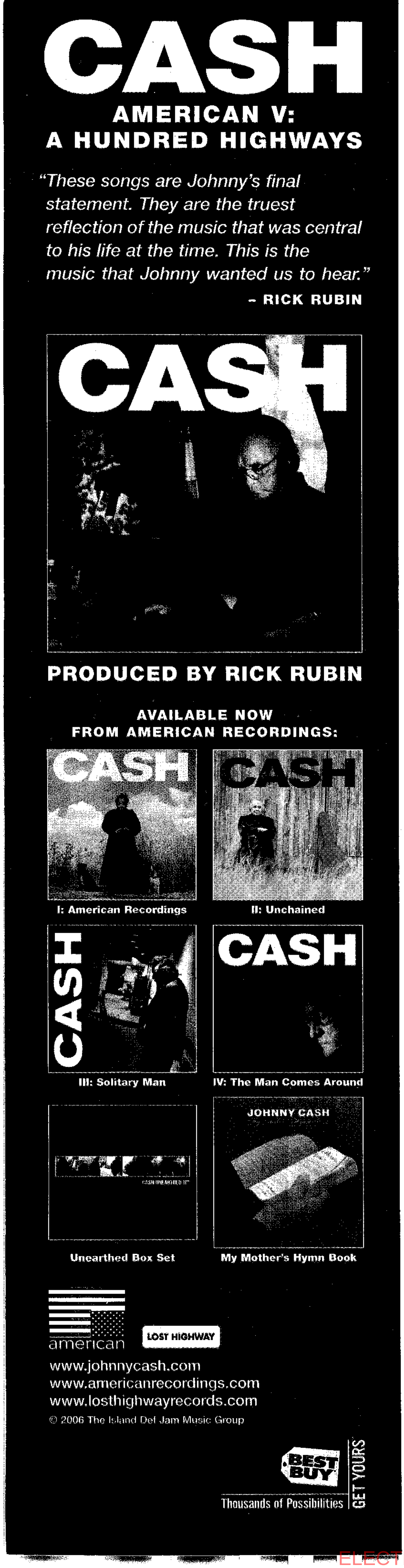
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CONTRIBUTORS

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (Fiction, p. 84), a novelist and historian, was awarded the 1970 Nobel Prize in Literature. "The Solzhenitsyn Reader: New and Essential Writings, 1947-2005," edited by Edward E. Ericson, Jr., and Daniel J. Mahoney, will be published in November.

Judith Thurman (The Talk of the Town, p. 34) has a collection of her *New Yorker* essays, entitled "Cleopatra's Nose," coming out next year.

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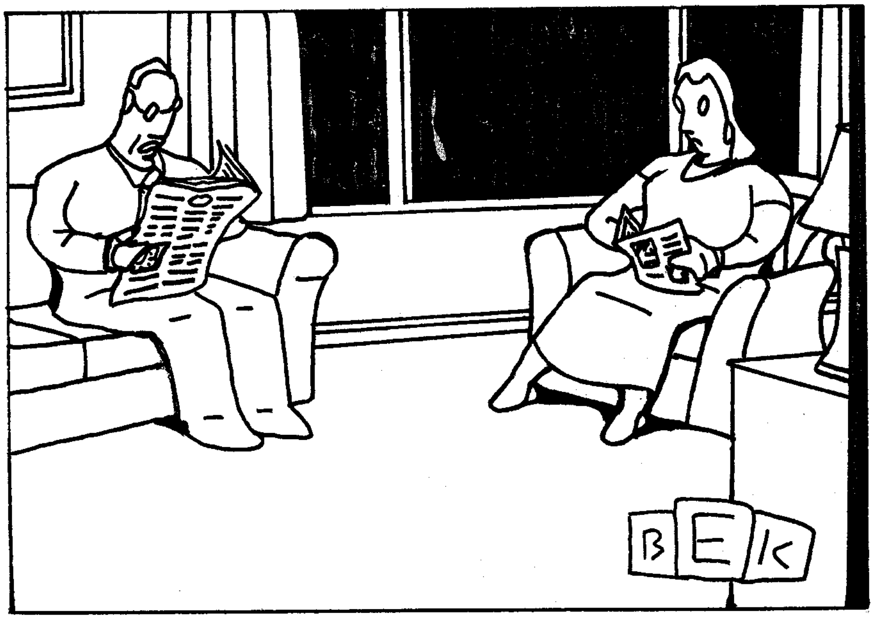

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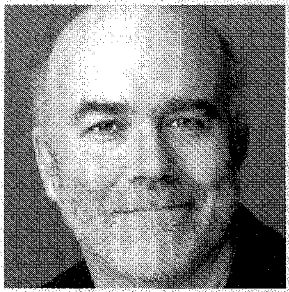

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"I lingered over every sentence as if it were a heavily truffled risotto." ANTHONY BOURDAIN

"A full-to-bursting, hugely entertaining and moving book... [Here is] a writer lighting on the subject of a lifetime." L.A. TIMES

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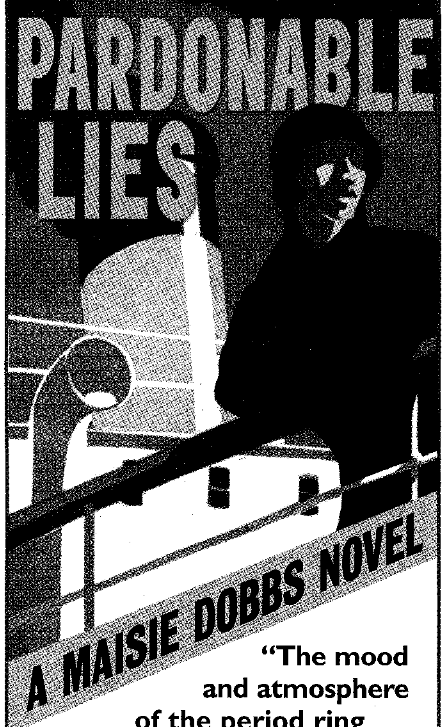

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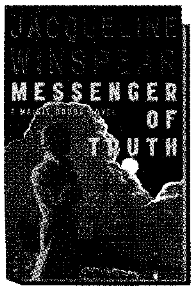

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LITERARY LICENSE

As the former assistant to Valerie Eliot who wrote in the *Guardian* about Mrs. Eliot's dislike of the Ph.D. industry, I am hard-pressed to say who is less attractive in D. T. Max's story about the Joyce estate: Stephen James Joyce or the academics now suing him ("The Injustice Collector," June 19th). Literary scholarship today often seems to include intimations of unappreciated female genius and a suspicion of incest, as is the case in Carol Loeb Shloss's book about Lucia Joyce. Similar claims have been made about T. S. Eliot's first wife, Vivienne, for what I suspect are similar reasons: academic fashion, political correctness, and marketing strategy. And Lawrence Lessig, the lawyer bravely taking on the Joyce estate, is quoted as saying, "It's in the DNA of lawyers not to be intimidated," which strikes me as rather immaterial. Lessig engages in his many battles from the most secure job on the face of the earth, that of a tenured professor.

Karen Christensen
Great Barrington, Mass.

The late John Finley, professor of Greek and master of Eliot House at Harvard in the fifties, often spoke of Harvard as a global village, long before the term became popular, to describe the simultaneous intimacy and diversity of the university. Aware that Stephen James Joyce, Paul Matisse, and Sadruddin Aga Khan, all members of the Class of 1954, shared a suite at Eliot House—a cohabitation Finley probably contrived—he liked to point out that "in one suite at Eliot House we have the grandson of the greatest writer of the twentieth century, the grandson of the greatest painter of the century, and the son of God." Some years later, I was present when Stephen Joyce told an assembly of Joyce scholars that he had destroyed letters written to him by Lucia Joyce and Samuel Beckett's postcards to her. Michael Yeats was also present, as was Ezra Pound's daughter. She spoke eloquently about being the child of a famous person, the divided loyalties to the public and to family privacy that it entails, and especially about her decision to give scholars access to clinical reports from Pound's stay at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Michael Yeats, who has been exemplary in allowing access to his father's archive, said that he and his mother had often discussed whether some letter or scrap of manuscript should be burned, adding, "But we never did it."

Robert Tracy
Emeritus Professor
English and Celtic Studies
University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, Calif.

Max reports that "the Nabokov estate fought an unsuccessful battle to prevent the publication in English of 'Lo's Diary,' an Italian novel based on 'Lolita.' " The estate's litigation over "Lo's Diary" was hardly unsuccessful. We sued to prevent publication of a novel that—without authorization—would have blatantly violated the estate's copyright in "Lolita." The intended U.S. and British publishers—Farrar, Straus & Giroux and Macmillan U.K.—quickly backed down and cancelled their publication plans, ending the lawsuit. The veteran publisher Barney Rosset stepped in to propose an authorized edition at his imprint, Foxrock. Since the estate's interest was never about money, only about respect for its copyrights, we quickly agreed to a license, under which all of Nabokov's proceeds were donated to PEN, the international writers' organization.

Peter L. Skolnik
Lowenstein Sandler, P.C.
New York City and Roseland, N.J.

•

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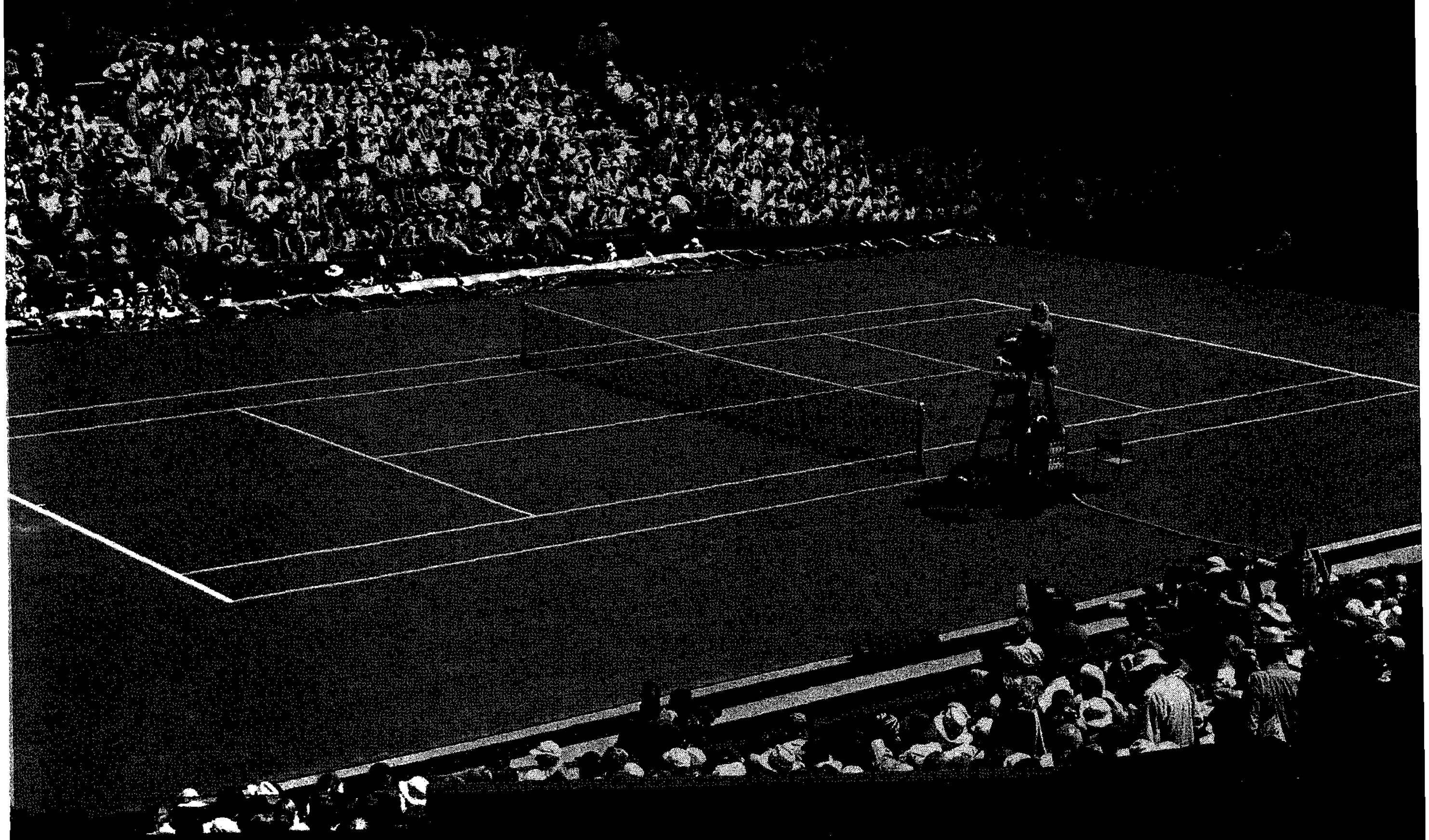

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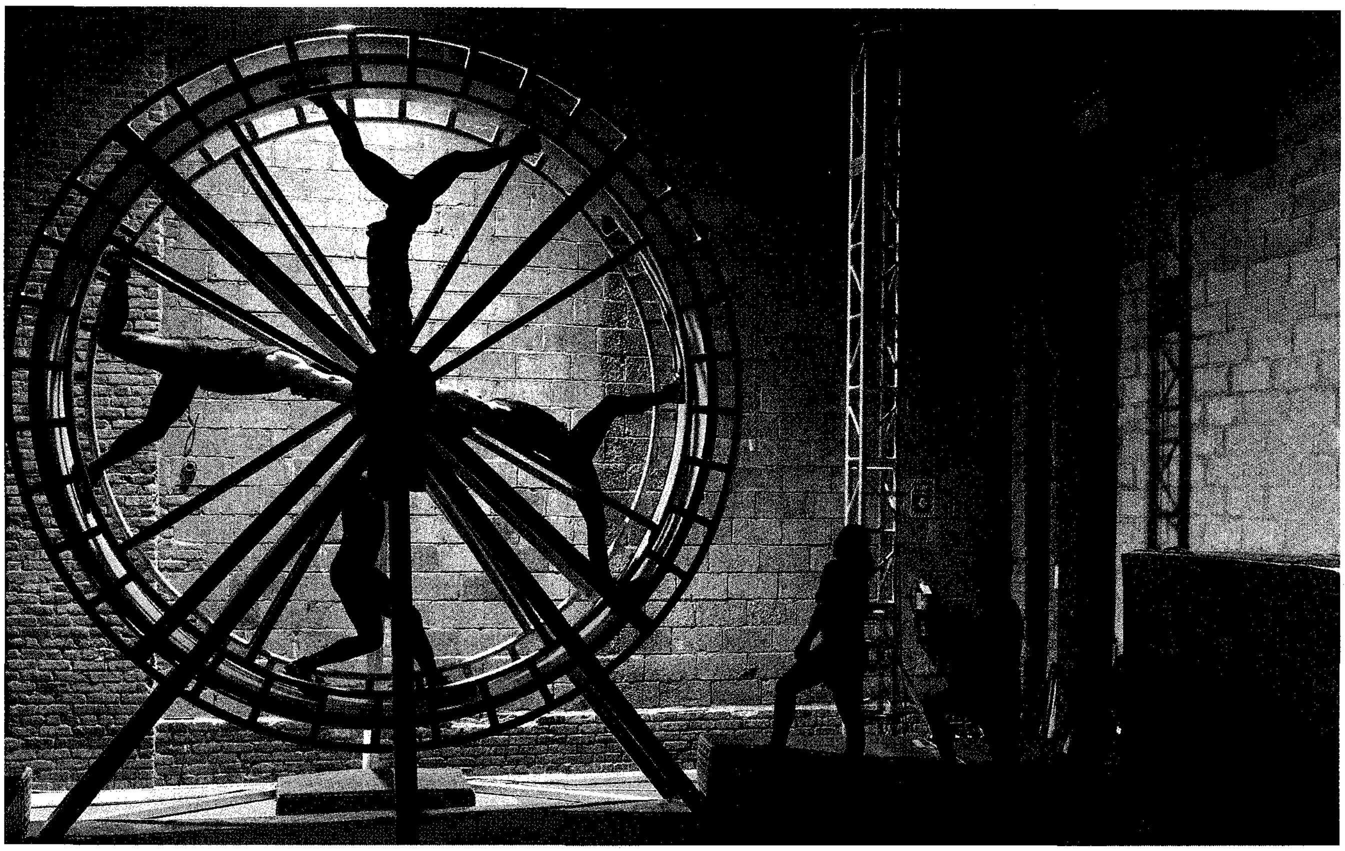


Streb Extreme Action, currently at Lincoln Center. Photograph by Brian Finke.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18				

THIS WEEK

THE THEATRE
YEAH, BABY

"Shout! The Mod Musical," an ironic look at five young ladies coming of age in the era of women's lib, the Pill, and "Barbarella," features the songs of Petula Clark, Dusty Springfield, Lulu, and Cilla Black and begins previews at the Julia Miles Theatre. (See page 12.)

NIGHT LIFE
RADIO HOGWARTS

The bookish rock band Harry and the Potters is led by two brothers from Boston who dress like their namesake, in V-neck sweaters, ties, and little spectacles; their lighthearted songs are written from the point of view of the young wizard. They're in town, with an afternoon show at the Donnell Library and a show later that night, at the Knitting Factory. (See page 14.)

ART
WITH A PADDLE

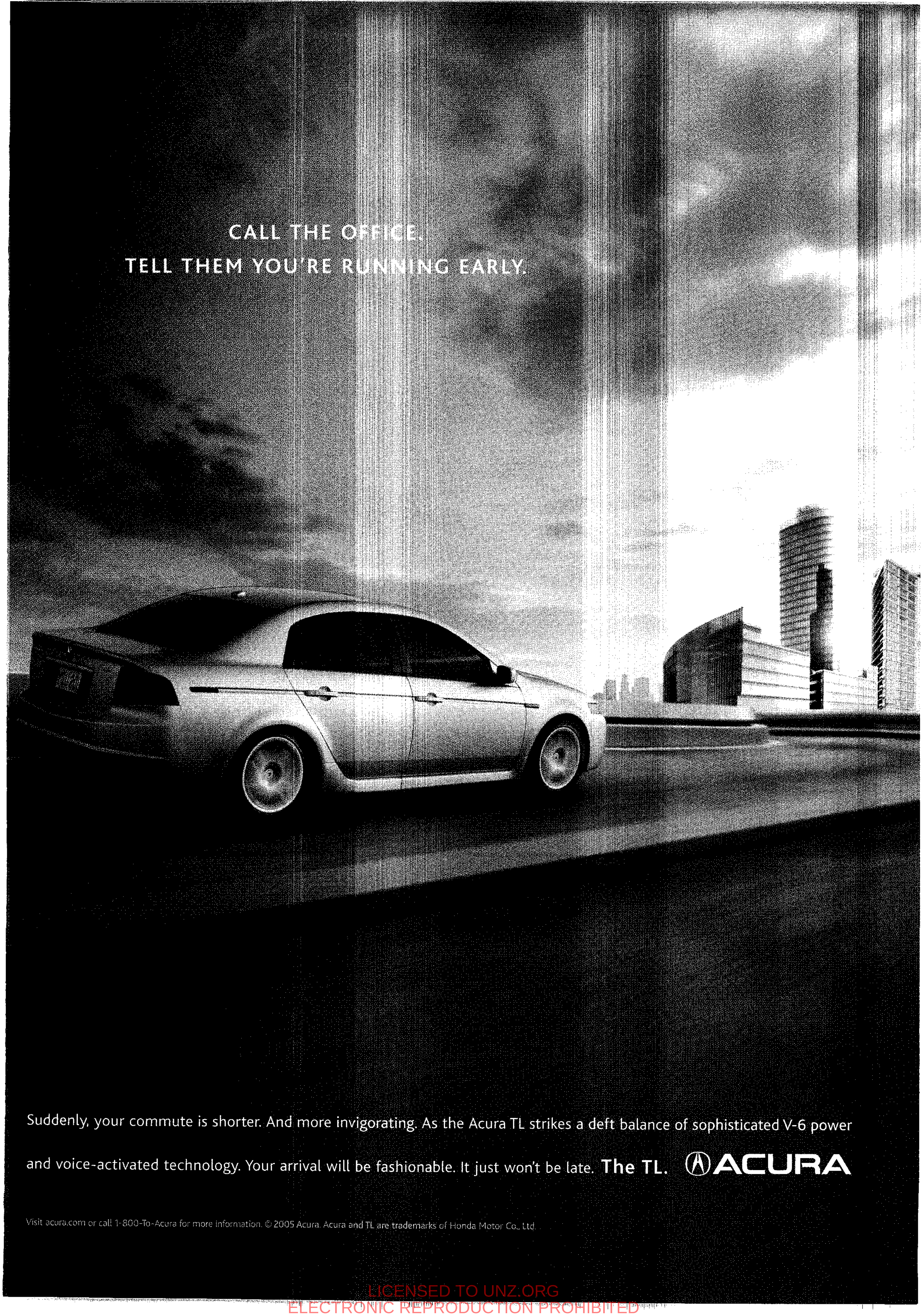
Nancy Rubins's last project in New York was a pair of gravity-defying clouds built from old airplane parts, at the Kasmin gallery, in early 2005. For "Big Pleasure Point," at Lincoln Center, she's using a different formula for another of her huge, carefully engineered assemblages. This time, the shape is an arch and the materials are discarded pleasure craft—surfboards, kayaks, Jet Skis, and others. (See page 17.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
KEYS TO THE CITY

The International Keyboard Institute and Festival will include solo performances by such enticing cult players as Earl Wild and Marc-André Hamelin; it starts with a recital of works by Chopin and Schumann by its founder, Jerome Rose. (See page 24.)

MOVIES
FROM WEST TO EAST

The Walter Reade Theatre ends its Benoît Jacquot series with "Princess Marie," the three-hour psycho-spectacle starring Catherine Deneuve as Marie Bonaparte, Freud's disciple, and follows it with "Heroic Grace," a nine-day program of martial-arts films from Hong Kong, many produced by the Shaw brothers and including such classics as "The Magic Blade" and "The Jade Tiger." (See page 30.)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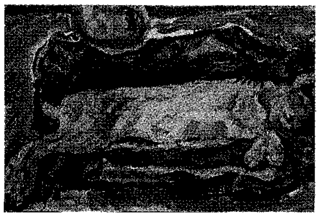
CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
MEATY SUBJECTS

The sublime bohemian Chaim Soutine, who was born in a Lithuanian shtetl in 1893 and died in Paris in 1943, keeps slipping from canonical status as a modern master—too independent of movements, too giddily eccentric, too something—only to be restored, now and again, with a bang. "Soutine and Modern Art," a museum-quality exhibition at Cheim & Read, shows why: Soutine repeatedly electrifies new generations of painters. On hand are seventeen of his landscapes and still-lifes, notably the thundering "Carcass of Beef" (1925), from the Albright-Knox, in Buffalo, and MOMA's "View of Cagnes," which suggests a Cézanne beset with delirium tremens. Apposite works by twenty-one artists who have revered him—including Willem de Kooning, Lucian Freud, Philip Guston, Georg Baselitz, and Susan Rothenberg—demonstrate the reach and character of his influence. It's about pushing paint around. Clement Greenberg wrote that "one has to go back to Rembrandt to find anything to which his touch can be likened." Soutine's vertiginous countrysides and voluptuously dead animals don't so much express emotion as pull it in, cyclone-fashion, from the world at large. The brushstrokes roar, weep, and sing like a band of dirty angels.

—*Peter Schjeldahl*



CHAIM SOUTINE, "RABBIT" (1918)

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ALL THIS INTIMACY
The world première of a play by Rajiv Joseph, about a thirty-year-old's struggle to become a man. Previews begin July 17. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 212-246-4422.)

ICE FACTORY FESTIVAL
Soho Think Tank's festival of new work opens with a Concrete Temple Theatre production of "Achtung Grimm!," followed by Aruba's "People Can Run." Opens July 5. (Ohio, 66 Wooster St. 212-868-4444.)

ORANGE LEMON EGG CANARY
Rinne Groff's latest play is a love story about a magician and his beautiful assistant. Directed by Michael Sexton. Previews begin July 12. Opens July 14. (P.S. 122, at 150 First Ave. 212-352-3101.)

ROOM SERVICE
Pecadillo Theatre Company presents a revival of John Murray and Allen Boretz's 1937 farce, about a theatre producer who fakes his death to avoid eviction. Previews begin July 6. Opens July 10. (Bank Street Theatre, 155 Bank St. 212-868-4444.)

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS
Labyrinth Theatre Company and the Public Theatre present the world première of a new play by José Rivera ("The Motorcycle Diaries"), about the Bolivian government's imprisonment of Che Guevara. In previews. Opens July 6. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

SECRETS
In Gerald Zipper's drama, a dinner party devolves into depravity for a group of married couples. Ted Mornel directs. In previews. Opens July 13. (St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 212-239-6200.)

SHOUT! THE MOD MUSICAL
England in the nineteen-sixties is the setting of this musical revue, about the coming-of-age of five young women. Phillip George directs. Previews begin July 11. (Julia Miles, 424 W. 55th St. 212-239-6200.)

NOW PLAYING

THE BUSY WORLD IS HUSHED
In Keith Bunin's articulate but thoroughly contrived new play, a widowed Episcopal theologian, Hannah (Jill Clayburgh), hires the thoughtful Brandt (Hamish Linklater) to ghostwrite her scholarly book on a newly unearthed Coptic gospel, apparently composed around 50 A.D. If authentic, it may contain the earliest record of Christ's teachings. Their discussion about faith (hers) and doubt (his) is interrupted by the arrival of Hannah's restless son, Thomas (in an arch performance by Luke MacFarlane), whose angst is of the expository, look-at-me variety. Brandt is immediately drawn to Thomas, but it's only with Hannah's encouragement that he summons the courage to woo him. Episcopal anguish, theological mystery, and motherhood all figure in the play, but Bunin hasn't illustrated them convincingly. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through July 9.)

GODOT HAS LEFT THE BUILDING
Joe (Edward Griffin) and Sebastian (Scott David Nogi) are the unlucky heirs to Vladimir and Estragon in John Griffin's modern-day take on Beckett, directed by Will Pomerantz. They're stranded in a postapocalyptic trash heap filled with old computer monitors and crumpled Starbucks cups, which leaves them plenty of time for clownish bickering, games, and consideration of life's great mysteries. Also, they're waiting for something, but they're not sure what, or whom; the suggestion is that the human imagination has so disintegrated that we're no longer able to conjure up a savior to give us meaning. Inevitably, the philosophical patter lacks the stinging lyricism and depth of the play that inspired it. At best, it's like existential fan fiction. (45 Below, 45 Bleecker St. 212-352-3101. Through July 9.)

THE HOUSE IN TOWN
Set in 1929, in a town house on the stretch of Twenty-third Street once known as Millionaire's Row, Richard Greenberg's play focusses on Sam (the stolid, square-jawed Mark Harelik), a responsible Jewish furniture-store owner with a past, and his wife of many years, Amy (Jessica Hecht), a Wasp from Saratoga. Now in their forties, Sam and Amy are bound together only by money, comfort, prestige, and exoticism. The actors generate a tension that doesn't exist in the script, and Hecht brings a rare intelligence to her role. Greenberg's well-made play is, ultimately, a work of nostalgia, an expression of distaste for the ideas and emotions and women populating the New York we live in now. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/3/06.) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

MACBETH
The first offering of the Public Theatre's Shakespeare in the Park season stars Liev Schreiber. Moisés Kaufman directs. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 212-539-8750. Through July 9.)

PIG FARM
Sludge gets on everyone in Roundabout Theatre Company's deranged farce, by Greg Kotis ("Urinetown"), including a foursome of outstanding comic actors and an unseen cast of around fifteen thousand swine, who oink expectantly from the wings. The only thing that isn't sloppy is John Rando's meticulous direction; up until the play's dénouement, which is outright ludicrous, Rando brings a necessary touch of restraint to this story of a potbellied farmer (John Ellison Conlee), his lonely wife (Katie Finneran), a hired hand (Logan Marshall-Green) with an eye for the lady of the house, and a government bureaucrat (Denis O'Hare) who comes to inspect the pens. Mayhem ensues, and New York audiences get to learn about the combination of blood, sweat, and slapstick that goes into their bacon supply. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

OUT OF TOWN

BARD SUMMERSCAPE
"Camille," adapted by Neil Bartlett, is the tragic story of a Parisian prostitute. Kate Whoriskey directs. July 6-16. (Fisher Center for the Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson. 845-758-7900.)

BERKSHIRE THEATRE FESTIVAL
The Main Stage production of "Amadeus," directed by Eric Hill, runs through July 8. "Coastal Disturbances" opens July 11. (Stockbridge, Mass. For more information, visit www.berkshiretheatre.org. 413-298-5576.)

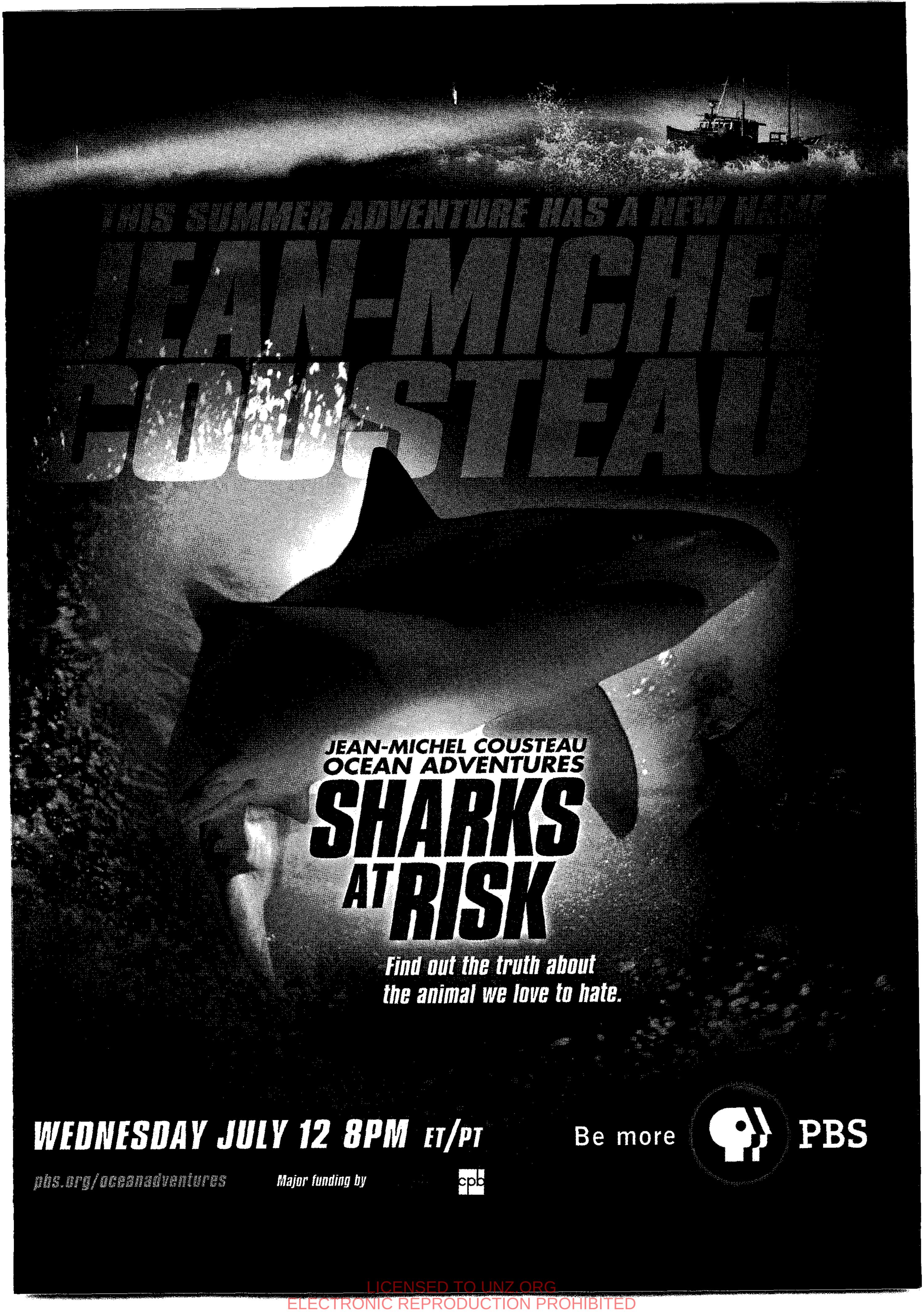
HELLO, DOLLY!
Tovah Feldshuh stars in the 1964 Tony-winning musical, at the Paper Mill Playhouse. (Millburn, N.J. 973-376-4343.)

HUDSON VALLEY SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL
Terrence O'Brien directs "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (Garrison, N.Y. For more information, visit www.hvshakespeare.org. 845-265-9575.)

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL
Roger Rees directs Cole Porter's "Anything Goes" at the Main Stage, July 5-16. At the Nikos Stage, Cusi Cram's "Lucy and the Conquest" opens July 12. (Williamstown, Mass. 413-597-3400.)

Also Playing

BRIDGE & TUNNEL: Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **THE COLOR PURPLE:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200. **THE DROWSY CHAPERONE:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100. **FAITH HEALER:** Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE FIELD:** Irish Repertory, 132 W. 22nd St. 212-727-2737. **THE HISTORY BOYS:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **JACQUES BREL IS ALIVE AND WELL AND LIVING IN PARIS:** Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 212-239-6200. **JERSEY BOYS:** August Wilson, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200. **THE LIEUTENANT OF INISHMORE:** Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. **THE LION KING:** Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4747.



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MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT: Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200. **SHINING CITY:** Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200. Through July 16. **SOME GIRL(S):** Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 212-279-4200. Through July 8. **SPRING AWAKENING:** Atlantic Theatre Company, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200. **SUSAN AND GOD:** Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231. Through July 16. **SWEENEY TODD:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200. **TREASON:** Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 212-868-4444. **THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE:** Circle in the Square, 50th St. between Broadway and Eighth Ave. 212-239-6200. **THE WATER'S EDGE:** Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422. Through July 9. **THE WEDDING SINGER:** Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

The Lincoln Center Festival presents the Balkan musician Goran Bregovic.

JOHN RITTER

NIGHT LIFE

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—July 7: The neo-soul singer **Angie Stone.** July 16: The eye-patch-wearing rap veteran **Slick Rick.** July 17: Reggae with **Israel Vibration.**

BEACON THEATRE
Broadway at 74th St. (212-307-7171)—July 10-11: The pop troubadour **Elvis Costello's** latest stylistic influence comes from New Orleans. Following benefits for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts, he recorded the album "The River in Reverse" with the R. & B. legend **Allen Toussaint.** The two are touring with Costello's band the Impostors and Toussaint's accomplices, the Crescent City Horns, in tow.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—July 12: The **Alarm.** In their mid-eighties heyday, this Welsh quartet was known for high ideals and even higher hair. They traded in impassioned rock that paired folksy instrumentation with a punky delivery. Their new album is called "Under Attack." July 15: The ladies of **Lez Zeppelin** get the Led out. July 18: Houston's **Blue October** is a confrontational quintet that plays blistering, confessional rock that is as stylistically torn as it is lyrically wrought.

CELEBRATE BROOKLYN!
Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park W. at 9th St. (718-855-7882, ext. 45)—July 6: The Canadian ensemble **Broken Social Scene** performs a benefit for this free concert series. July 13: **Yo La Tengo,** the noted Hoboken trio with a flair for crisp, three-minute pop songs as well as sprawling feedback experiments, performs live scores to short films by Jean Painlevé.

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE
Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. (212-360-2777)—July 16: **Amadou & Mariam** are blind vocalists who have long translated the blues of their native Mali for Western ears. Their latest album, "Dimanche à Bamako," is an urbane, polyphonic joy.

DONNELL LIBRARY CENTER
20 W. 53rd St. (212-621-0618)—July 5: **Harry and the Potters.** Paul and Joe DeGeorge, a pair of brothers from Boston, got together a few years ago and started writing songs from the perspective of pop culture's most successful boy wizard. The music is retro-sounding, a little folk, a lot rock opera (think of a more literary "Tommy"). Joe plays Harry, year four, and Paul plays Harry, year seven, and they sing lines like "I got a mysterious gift from my dead dad / It was an invisibility cloak, how rad!" Their shows, often free and in libraries (as is this afternoon one), are favorites of the preteen set and of unwashed rockers: Pitchfork, the supreme arbiter of indie cred, named their New York show last year one of the best performances of 2005. (See also the Knitting Factory.)

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—July 6: Step aside, Don Ho: Hawaii's ukulele wunderkind, **Jake Shimabukuro,** has arrived. This twenty-nine-year-old performer has become a phenomenon, thanks in part to a video of him playing George Harrison's "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" on a ukulele in Central Park, which was seen by people around the world on YouTube.com. His live shows include songs by the Beatles and Lynyrd Skynyrd, as well as Hawaiian, classical, and original compositions. Opening for Shimabukuro is an electronic hip-hop and jazz-funk trio led by **Dana Leong,** a virtuoso cellist who is equally proficient at trombone (he plays both instruments in Peck Allmond's Kalimba Kollective and is a regular at the Jazz Gallery with his own outfit). July 13: Slide guitar meets R. & B. in the Western soul of the **Hacienda Brothers,** who are Chris Gaffney and Dave Gonzalez. Their latest record, "What's Wrong with Right," was produced by the Southern songwriter **Dan Penn,** who will join them here.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—July 5: **Harry and the Potters** (see the Donnell Library Center) stay up late. July 12: The local theatrical glam-rock group the **Fabulous Entourage.**

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL
Goran Bregovic, a half-Serbian, half-Croatian Gypsy-music composer, comes to town with his impassioned backup band, the Wedding and Funeral Orchestra. Bregovic wrote the classic themes to Emir Kusturica's "Underground" and "Time of the Gypsies," and, like his peers in cinematic music Nino Rota and Ennio Morricone, he writes scores that are so powerful that it's far easier to imagine the music without the movie than the other way around. Bregovic, who was born in Sarajevo, was one of the top Balkan pop acts before war consumed his homeland and forced him to move (he now lives in Paris). This appearance, his first in New York City, will highlight the broad spectrum of his gifts, from raucous Serbian brass-band rave-ups to aching accordion laments. He'll be joined by forty musicians, including a twelve-piece classical string ensemble, a Serbian men's choir, and several Eastern European vocalists. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-721-6500. July 13.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING
The dancing under the stars at Lincoln Center continues on July 5, with **Big Bandjo** and its banjo-driven swing. July 6: *Bomba,* salsa, and more with **Plena Libre.** July 7: A night of Irish music with the **Liz Carroll and John Doyle Band.** July 8: A Western-swing program for kids in the morning is followed that night by the salsa band **Sonora Carruseles.** July 11: The big-band swing of the **City Rhythm Orchestra.** July 12: A hustle party. July 13: The **Boilermaker Jazz Band** plays ragtime and swing classics. July 14: The jump blues of **Li'l Ronnie & the Grand Dukes.** July 15: Salsa with **Bio Ritmo.** July 18: The **Tommy Dorsey Orchestra.** (212-721-6500. Through July 22.)

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—July 13-15: "Full Force: The New Rock Complexity," a mini-festival of experimental bands, curated by John Zorn. Highlights follow. July 13: **Rashanim,** an original and dynamic trio led by Jon Madof, on electric guitar (specifically, a '79 Gibson 335, through which he channels Duane Eddy, Jimi Hendrix, and a bit of Neil Young), plays rock-propelled selections of Jewish, Middle Eastern, and Israeli folk melodies. July 15: The Detroit band **Larval,** founded by the guitarist and ex-New Yorker Bill Brovold, specializes in asymmetric structures, ringing guitar drones, hypnotic ostinatos, and unusual riffs that recall British avant-rock bands like King Crimson and Henry Cow. Brovold, who is also a visual artist, left New York in 1990, but he has a long history with the downtown community and is back in New York at the invitation of his old collaborator Zorn.

WEBSTER HALL
125 E. 11th St. (212-353-1600)—July 12: The singer-songwriter **Beth Orton.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—July 5-8: **Steve Kuhn,** a marvellous pianist who finds new vistas in old standards, backed up by a first-rate rhythm

section—the bassist **Ron Carter** and the drummer **Al Foster.** July 12-15: Big-band experience runs deep with the saxophonist **Joe Lovano;** attention-grabbing stints with Woody Herman and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra preceded his rise to fame. For this special engagement, he's joined by the **Cleveland Jazz Orchestra,** which is stocked with accomplished players from Lovano's home town.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—July 5, July 12, and July 19: The old-time swing of **Vince Giordano** and the **Nighthawks.** July 6-9: It's been decades since the jazz flautist **Bobbi Humphrey** made any significant dent in the charts, but hip-hop sampling of her groove-heavy seventies work has kept her name alive. July 13-16: The line between mainstream jazz and classic R. & B. disappears in the work of the tenor saxophonist **David (Fathead) Newman,** a linchpin of Ray Charles's peak-era band. His most recent album, "Cityscape," covers everything from the theme to "Goldfinger" to Billy Strayhorn's "A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing." Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.** The **Mingus Big Band** takes over on Tuesdays.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—July 12-13: The adventurous pianist **Frank Kimbrough,** a regular member of the Jazz Composers Collective, is joined by the drummer **Paul Motian** (who contributed to his new album, "Play") and the bassist **Jay Anderson.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—July 4-9: The alto saxophonist and flute player **Steve Wilson,** best known for his work with Chick Corea, leads his own quintet. July 11-16: The death, last year, of the bassist Percy Heath hasn't stopped the saxophonist **Jimmy** and the drummer **Albert (Tootie)** from continuing with the **Heath Brothers** band. The pianist **Jeb Patton** and the bassist **Peter Washington** round out the group here. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-535-7710)—**"Raphael at the Metropolitan: The Colonna Altarpiece."** There's an exciting lurch in the style of Raphael's "The Colonna Madonna" (1504-05), an altarpiece whose long-dispersed parts, most belonging to the Met, have been reconvened, along with related works by others and documentation of its star-dusted provenance (including Francis I, of France, and J. P. Morgan). Raphael turned twenty-one while painting Mary and the baby Jesus on an outdoor throne, attended by a toddler John the Baptist and four saints, with a lunette of God the Father and a predella of scenes from the Passion. The decorous manner of an early influence, Perugino, abruptly gives way, in the male saints, to rugged cues from Michelangelo. The High Renaissance has begun. Through Sept. 3. ♦ **"Girodet: Romantic Rebel."** Through Aug. 27. ♦ **"Treasures of Sacred Maya Kings."** Through Sept. 10. ♦ **"The Art of Betty Woodman"** gathers ceramic works from throughout the artist's career. Through July 30. ♦ **"Cai Guo-Qiang on the Roof: Transparent Monument."** This summer, the roof garden is home to four sculptural works by the Chinese-born artist. Among them are "Clear Sky Black Cloud," a timed gunpowder explosion that produces a small cloud of smoke over Central Park each day at noon. Through Oct. 29. ♦ **"Hatshepsut: From Queen to Pharaoh."** Through July 9. ♦ **"Rembrandt and His Circle: Drawings and Prints."** Opens July 11. ♦ **"Anglo-Mania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion."** Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"On Photography: A Tribute to Susan Sontag."** Through Sept. 4. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

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Words on Music

Borders' music expert Jessica Sendra says:
"Already well established as one of jazz's singular interpreters and innovators, Mehldau reveals another dimension of his artistry in a set of compositions for trio from 2002, and poetry settings for Reneé Fleming in his first classical collaboration."

Brad Mehldau Trio
HOUSE ON HILL
Love Sublime/Brad Mehldau and Renée Fleming

BRAD MEHLDAU TRIO
House on Hill

BRAD MEHLDAU AND RENÉE FLEMING
Love Sublime

Pianist Brad Mehldau steps forward as composer on two new releases this month –

House on Hill features the jazz trio he led for a decade and features original tunes performed with Larry Grenadier (bass) and his former drummer Jorge Rossy, from the sessions that produced his *Anything Goes* album.

Love Sublime is an album of songs performed with soprano Renée Fleming. Set to writings by Rainer Maria Rilke, Louise Bogan, and Fleurine (the title track), they were composed expressly for Fleming, who premiered this Carnegie commission at Zankel Hall with Mehldau in 2005.

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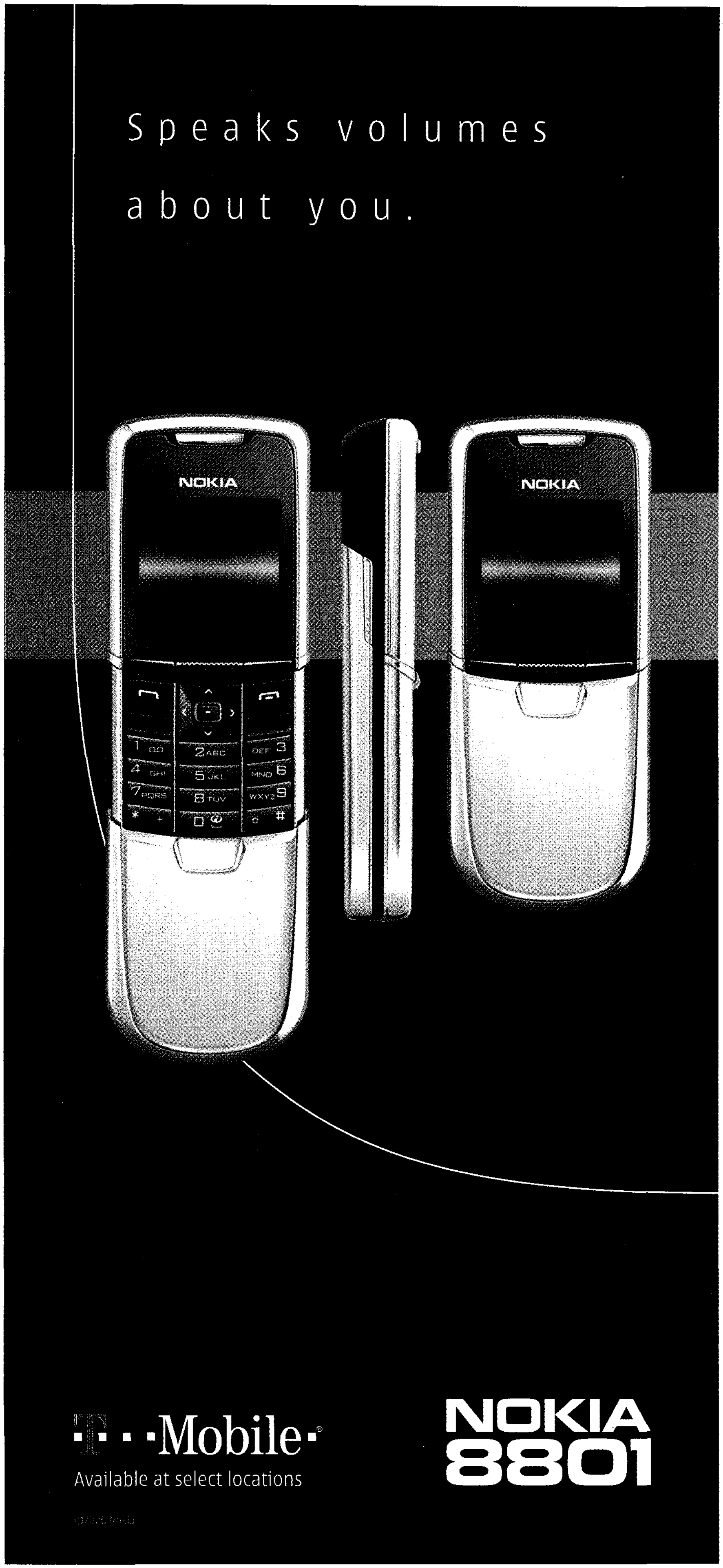

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9400)—**"Dada,"** a large and illuminating survey of the anti-art movement that countered despair with absurdity. Through Sept. 11. ♦ **"Douglas Gordon: Timeline"** includes the artist's most famous work, the glacially paced "24 Hour *Psycho*." Through Sept. 4. ♦ **"Against the Grain: Contemporary Art from the Edward R. Broida Collection."** Through July 10. (Open Wednesdays through Mondays, 10:30 to 5:30, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"No Limits, Just Edges: Jackson Pollock Paintings on Paper."** Through Sept. 29. ♦ **"Zaha Hadid."** Through Oct. 25. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (800-944-8639)—**"Full House,"** the Whitney's seventy-fifth-anniversary extravaganza, includes a floor devoted entirely to the works of Edward Hopper. Through Sept. 3. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

DRAWING CENTER
35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166)—**"Eva Hesse: Drawing."** Through July 15. ♦ The duo of Oliver Halsman Rosenberg and Clint Taniguchi collaborate, from their respective homes in San Francisco and Tokyo, under the name Crust and Dirt. Via Webcam, they extend their range to places like Shanghai and Barcelona, collecting "wishes" from passersby there. **"Crust and Dirt's Instant Drawing Machine,"** at the Drawing Room, presents examples of their scroll-like illustrations of these fantasies, some of which (behind a curtain) glow in the dark under black light. Jason, from N.Y.C., wants to retire to Rio; Asami, in Tokyo, longs to eat "the most delicious food in the world." These are cute, banal desires, and the drawings match. Through July 22. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 6, and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION
1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700)—**"Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702-89): Swiss Master."** Through Sept. 17. ♦ **"Veronese's Allegories: Virtue, Love, and Exploration in Renaissance Venice."** Through July 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Sundays, 11 to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (212-423-3200)—**"Eva Hesse: Sculpture."** Through Sept. 17. ♦ **"Max Liebermann: From Realism to Impressionism."** Through July 30. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45, Thursdays, 11 to 9, and Fridays, 11 to 3. For the duration of the Hesse show, the museum will also be open on Saturdays, from 11 to 5:45, with no charge for admission.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (212-534-1672)—**"We Skate Hardcore: Photographs from Brooklyn's Southside"** traces Vincent Cianni's eight-year project documenting the lives of a group of in-line skaters in Williamsburg. Through Aug. 6. ♦ **"On the Couch: Cartoons from *The New Yorker*"** presents almost eighty years' worth of psychoanalytic humor. Through July 26. ♦ **"The High Style of Dorothy Draper."** Through Sept. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
170 Central Park W., at 77th St. (212-873-3400)—**"Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery."** The museum's first foray into contemporary art explores an ignoble history. Much of the work is familiar to art initiates: Betye Saar's assemblages using racist Americana-memorabilia, Carrie Mae Weems's photoconceptual arrangements, Glenn Ligon's word paintings, Kara Walker's ever-effective silhouettes. Fred Wilson revisits the formula of his famous 1992 exhibition at the Maryland Historical Society, which employed objects from the collection to critique history and institutions. (The installation here couples marble busts of George Washington with a tobacco-shop figurine of an African-American man.) Context is everything, and this gathering of works, in this setting, offers a complex critique both of monolithic historical narratives and the ways in which

American slavery has gone largely unaddressed in official and public venues. Through Jan. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Summer-hours warning: Many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

RUDY BURCKHARDT
Burckhardt (1914-99) is best known for his photographs of New York School artists like Willem de Kooning, Larry Rivers, and Mark Rothko. Where those images relied on the psychology of their sitters, the subtle bits of expression or angst caught by the lens, his paintings, executed over six decades, from the forties to the nineties, pull back and capture the city at large, its skyscraper-window grids, signs painted on the sides of buildings, manhole covers, and rooftop water towers. The images resemble, at times, Edward Hopper. But where Hopper liked to plant people among his stark architectural tableaux, Burckhardt takes a breather on human drama and leaves his paintings mostly depopulated. Through July 28. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. 212-262-5050.)

"JIANG HU"
This survey, curated by a professor of art theory at the Ganzhou Academy, presents thirty-four contemporary Chinese artists working in sculpture, video, photography, and painting. The title means literally "rivers and lakes," with metaphorical resonances from the wild frontier to magical underworlds. The denizens of these border realms are, like most contemporary artists the world over, hybridizers and parodists. Anime superheroes, socialist realism, and glamour magazines collide, with imagery comprising a dead, decapitated Lenin, women embracing in front of a K.F.C. ad, and an eight-foot-high seated nude in painted fibreglass with an ominous scar across her belly. Through July 14. (Jack Tilton, 8 E. 76th St. 212-737-2221.)

Short List

JAMES CASTLE / WALKER EVANS: Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. 212-794-0550. Through Aug. 11. **WANGECHI MUTU:** Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212. Through July 28. **RICHARD PRINCE:** John McWhinnie at Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, 50 1/2 E. 64th St. 212-754-5626. Through July 24. **NANCY RUBINS:** Lincoln Center, Broadway at 64th St. 212-980-4575. Opens July 5. **LOUIS STETTNER:** Benrubi, 41 E. 57th St. 212-888-6007. Through July 29.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

CHRISTIAN HELLMICH
Painting about architecture has become popular to the point of excess, much the way seventies artists went overboard on the cube. But this young German painter's extremely well-crafted works breathe a bit of freshness into the genre. Planes of thick, industrially hued oil paint simulate sweeping expanses of floor or wall, modern cantilevers, and zigzagging parapets. Drips and splatters are visible in nooks and corners, creating the illusion of Expressionist abandon amid a highly controlled setting. Adding to this are the inches of surplus paint lapping off the edges of the canvases, contrasting with the picture plane, which has been squeegeed to precision. Altogether, it's a satisfying presentation that combines the rigor of architectural geometry with the luscious texture of painted surface. Through July 14. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

MARTIN SCHOELLER
Yikes! If you think that the closeup portrait photos Schoeller makes for the pages of this and other magazines are disconcerting, wait until you

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see them looming more than four feet high on the wall like Big Brother (and Sister) posters. Schoeller zooms in so near to Angelina Jolie, Valentino, Pelé, Donald Rumsfeld, and Jack Nicholson that the viewer has to back off just to get some perspective on the odd terrain. The faces that appear impervious to this sort of scrutiny (including Bill Clinton's and Brad Pitt's) are, in the end, no less alarming than those that have clearly weathered some storms. But it's interesting to see Cindy Sherman in this company—the master of disguises looks just as inscrutable without one. Through Sept. 1. (Hasted Hunt, 529 W. 20th St. 212-627-0006.)

"THE NAME OF THIS SHOW IS NOT GAY ART NOW"
One might be excused for thinking that this show's curator, Jack Pierson, has reverted back to earlier definitions of the word "gay." The work here is bright, merry, carefree—a virtual about-face from the eighties ACT-UP agitprop that served, arguably, as the first frankly gay art. The only nod in that bygone direction is Jonathan Horowitz's ink-jet-on-vinyl piece, a high-camp critique in which he quotes Elizabeth Taylor on her decision to donate the engagement ring given to her by Richard Burton to benefit AIDS causes. Other works steer entirely clear of gay tragedy or politics, instead celebrating homoerotica (paintings of suggestive plant life and boys kissing), excess (as in Andrea Fraser's pileup of discarded Brazilian carnival costumes), or icons like Judy Garland and Joan Crawford. Through July 14. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. 212-563-4474.)

"TOM ADLER: REDISCOVERED ARCHIVES AND GRAPHIC WORKS"
Over the past decade, Adler has made a name for himself as a publisher and promoter of exceptional vintage and contemporary surfing photographs. This refreshing small show brings together the work of several of his rediscoveries, notably Ron Church and Don James, both of whom made effortlessly elegant and exhilarating pictures of young men and the sea. Church's images from the nineteen-sixties and James's from the thirties and forties, all in black-and-white, have a timeless, calm, almost meditative quality. Adler uses this mellow mood as a jumping-off point for a series of diptychs that introduce color as well as a broader sense of history to the show. Through July 28. (Danziger, 521 W. 26th St. 212-629-6778.)

"VICE"
Editors at *Vice*, the hipper-than-thou alternamag with dreams of world domination, organized this sprawling, salon-style show of more than eighty pictures from its annual photo issue. Not surprisingly, the work is so aggressively slapdash that it's difficult to imagine the selection process. Good photographs by Ryan McGinley and Roe Ethridge are cancelled out by crude snapshots of a dead cat, a headless deer, a man vomiting, a man dying, topless girls, nude dudes, bloody wounds, drunks, junkies, and trash. Following all this mayhem, the decision to fill a back gallery with tough war-is-hell photos by Tim Page, Dana Stone, and Sean Flynn, three photojournalists who covered the conflict in Vietnam, feels not just gratuitous but insulting. Through July 21. (Silverstein, 535 W. 24th St. 212-627-3930.)

Short List

MARK DI SUVERO: Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. 212-255-1105. Through July 28. **ZAHA HADID:** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 212-633-6999. Through July 29. **TEUN HOCKS:** P.P.O.W., 555 W. 25th St. 212-647-1044. Through July 7. **ALEXANDRE ORION:** Foley, 547 W. 27th St. 212-244-9081. Through Aug. 12. **RICHARD SERRA:** Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 212-741-1111. Through Aug. 11. **STEPHEN SHORE:** 303, at 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121. Through July 7. **"MAPPLETHORPE/WARHOL":** Sean Kelly, 528 W. 29th St. 212-239-1181. Through July 28. **"SOUTINE AND MODERN ART":** Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 212-242-7727. Through Sept. 9.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

LEE MULLICAN
Mullican (1919-98) was a progenitor of New Age spiritualism, mingling different beliefs and practices into a workable, hybrid aesthetic. His abstract paintings look much like matches laid out on canvas in colorful radiating geometric patterns (he applied his pigment with a printer's ink knife). His sources range from Native American and Indian art to Surrealism and Zen to the aerial maps that he worked on as a topographical draftsman in the Army. The catch is that Mullican didn't just copy the look of non-Western forms; he used their philosophies as models for painterly methodology—a practice carried out today, albeit with heavy doses of systems-savvy irony, by painters like Terry Winters and Matthew Ritchie. Through July 15. (Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-6780.)

DANCE

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
Frederick Ashton's "Sylvia," presented in the penultimate week of the company's spring season, may lack substance in the plot department, but, with its intricate, quicksilver steps and melodious score, it is delightful all the same, and a fine showcase for the company's less romantically inclined ballerinas. Then "Le Corsaire" returns for three performances, followed by, in its final week, Kenneth MacMillan's "Romeo and Juliet," a lyrical and moving ballet with a timeless story and a powerful, descriptive score by Prokofiev. Full casts are listed on the company's Web site. ♦ July 5 at 2: "Sylvia" (with Michele Wiles). ♦ July 5 at 8: "Sylvia" (with Paloma Herrera). ♦ July 6 at 8: "Sylvia" (with Julie Kent). ♦ July 7 at 8: "Le Corsaire" (with Herrera and David Hallberg). ♦ July 8 at 2: "Le Corsaire" (with Wiles and Marcelo Gomes). ♦ July 8 at 8: "Le Corsaire" (with Irina Dvorovenko and Maxim Beloserkovsky). ♦ July 10 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Diana Vishneva and Ángel Corella). ♦ July 11 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Alessandra Ferri and José Manuel Carreño). ♦ July 12 at 2: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Xiomara Reyes and Corella). ♦ July 12 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Herrera and Hallberg). ♦ July 13 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Dvorovenko and Beloserkovsky). ♦ July 14 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Kent and Gomes). ♦ July 15 at 2: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Herrera and Hallberg). ♦ July 15 at 8: "Romeo and Juliet" (with Ferri and Carreño). (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000.)

BATTLEWORKS / PARADIGM
Robert Battle's sleek, youthful group shares an opening night at the Joyce with the company of mature dancers led by Gus Solomons, Jr., after which the groups perform on alternating nights. In two new works, Battle uses explosive movement to dramatize ritual. "Communion," set to Gregorian chants and Arvo Pärt, takes place on sacred ground; "Primate," danced to a score by Philip Hamilton inspired by Indonesian monkey chants, delivers high-wattage jolts with convulsions, crashes, and mimed cannibalism. Paradigm's nights are packed with premières, including a solo for Solomons by Wally Cardona, a puckish trio set to Satie by Larry Keigwin, and a jazzy septet by Carmen deLavallade. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. Shared program: July 5 at 8. Battleworks: July 6 and July 8 at 8 and July 9 at 2. Paradigm: July 7 at 8, July 8 at 2, and July 9 at 7:30.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA
The flamenco troupe, led by Soledad Barrio and her husband, Martín Santangelo, returns with "Cielo de Tierra" ("Heaven of Earth"). (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Marks Pl. 212-352-3101. July 6 at 8, July 8 and July 15 at 2 and 8, and July 16 at 2 and 5. Through July 30.)

NOCHE FLAMENCA / ROXANE BUTTERFLY'S WORLDBEATS
Old-school flamenco meets new-school tap on a shared bill of clicking heels at Central Park SummerStage. Noche Flamenca performs its fervent, rousing version of traditional flamenco, accompanied by throaty Gypsy singers and sonorous guitars. The prodigious tapper Roxane Butterfly mixes hip-hop and North African rhythms into her wide-ranging "Djellabah Groove." (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777. July 7 at 8.)

TABLES FOR TWO
BG

754 Fifth Ave., between 57th and 58th Sts., 7th fl. (212-872-8977)—This lovely, creamily comforting room on the seventh floor of Bergdorf Goodman, is sure to evoke in many women—and this is a place of women, almost exclusively—memories of mother-and-daughter outings. Like its department-store-restaurant forebears—such as Lord & Taylor's Bird Cage and B. Altman's Charleston Gardens—BG, which opened last year, is meant to provide an oasis for exhausted shoppers. But those fond, fusty places were not destinations like BG, with its north-facing views of Central Park. The question is whether, despite its up-to-date menu, it would be anyone's destination more than once: the room, with its pale-green avifaunal wallpaper, windowside tables for two, and fresh linen tablecloths, is much more satisfying than the fare. Instead of a perfect egg-salad sandwich, for instance, there is an overpriced plate of four devilled eggs with an undue abundance of Parma ham, and the dark edges of the egg mixture betold an assembly-line approach to preparation; these little devils had been made too far ahead of time. A warm vegetable salad, a specialty of the chef, Keith M. Williams, consists of slices of up to twenty-one different baby vegetables, such as wax beans, sugar snap peas, summer squash, and radishes. It couldn't have been cuter, but the wee things were overwhelmed by a heavy coat of butter.

Asian chicken salad—glass noodles with Napa cabbage, slivered red and yellow peppers, and watercress in a sesame-ginger vinaigrette—was also surprisingly heavy, and drowning in its dressing. Six oven-roasted shrimp, tails perkily pointing up, stood in a lobster-brandy sauce that was somehow too autumnal and burnt-tasting. The star of this dish was a supporting actor—a wild-mushroom flan that was the soul of savoriness. A waiter recommended roasted peaches for dessert, which turned out to be a whole peach, singular, in a sumptuous sabayon with a dollop of pistachio ice cream. Good luck achieving old-fashioned elegance as you attempt to cut the unyielding tennis ball of a peach and keep it from skidding off the plate and onto the floor. (Open daily until 8 P.M.; tea service available on weekdays. Entrées $27-$37.)

—*Nancy Franklin*

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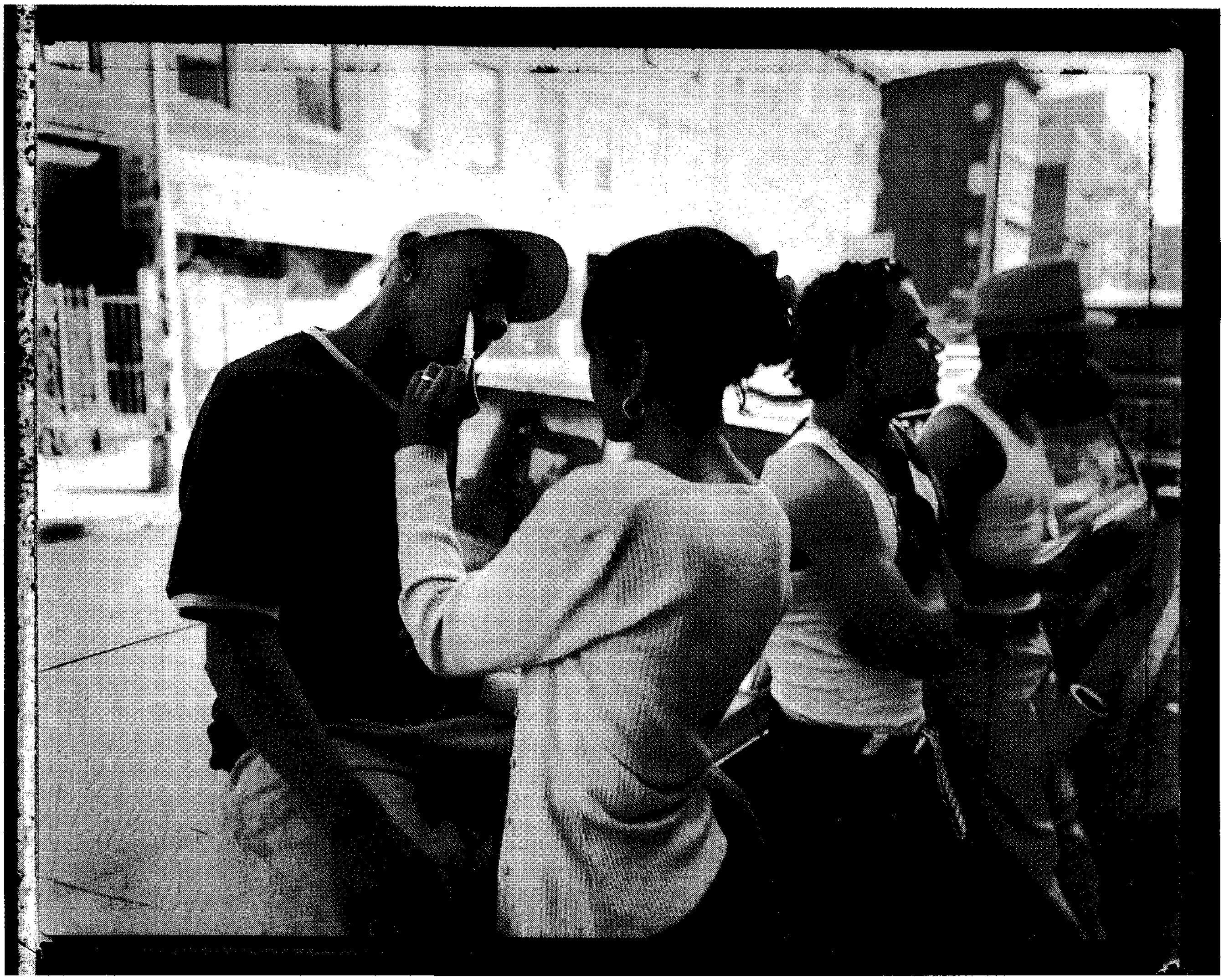


Vincent Cianni's photographs of a community of in-line skaters in Brooklyn are on view at the Museum of the City of New York.

CHUNKY MOVE
The hot Australian dance-theatre troupe presents "I Want to Dance Better at Parties," by its artistic director, Gideon Obarzanek. On video panels, five men talk about their social-dance experiences as if they were giving medical histories. There's an Israeli folk dancer, a Greek who likes night-clubbing, a late-blooming ballroom dancer, a gay clog dancer, and a laconic guy who just "avoids it at all costs." Onstage, underneath the screens, trained dancers embody the real men and their peers in scenes ranging from the literal to the highly impressionistic. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. July 11-14 at 8 and July 15 at 2 and 8.)

STREB EXTREME ACTION
For Elizabeth Streb's Lincoln Center Festival début, she's devised for her "action specialists" a show called "Streb vs. Gravity," which involves a motorized winch, a springboard, a waxed floor, a teeter-totter, swinging cinder blocks, a high-tension truck strap used as a tightrope, and a thirty-five-hundred-pound metal hamster wheel. (LaGuardia Drama Theatre, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. 212-721-6500. July 12 and July 14-15 at 7.)

CAPACITOR
A local favorite in San Francisco, known more for its heady concepts and gadgets than for its choreography, the science-minded troupe presents "Digging in the Dark." Developed in consultation with geophysicists, the work draws its structure from the layers of the earth—crust, mantle, core. Performers gather in a suspended orb or dance in the dark, captured by heat-sensitive cameras. (American Theatre of Actors, 314 W. 54th St. 212-352-0131. July 12-16 at 8. Through July 30.)

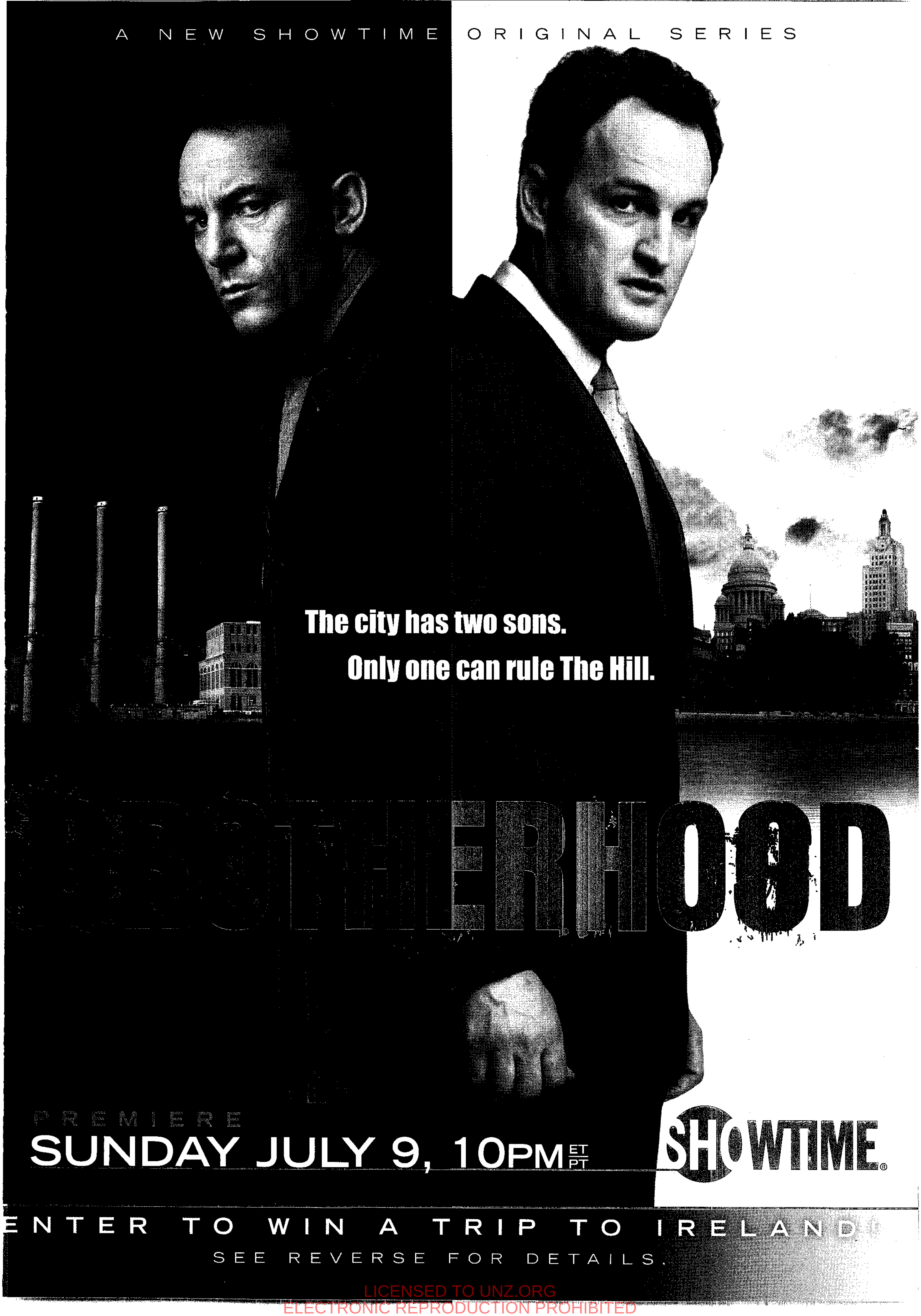
EMANUEL GAT DANCE
The Lincoln Center Festival is concentrating on Israeli dance companies this year. First up, and the least well known here, is Gat's troupe, which presents two unexpected and compelling interpretations of familiar scores. "Winter Voyage" sends a pair of men in floor-length tunics—now in unison, now in canon—sweeping across the stage to three of Schubert's lovelorn songs and the charged silence between them. "The Rite of Spring" answers Stravinsky's score with salsa dancing, which works surprisingly well. (LaGuardia Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. 212-721-6500. July 12 and July 14-15 at 9.)

VON USSAR DANCEWORKS
At the Joyce SoHo, Astrid Von Ussar's company presents a new work, "23 Hours," in which Von Ussar explores what happens to six random people in the course of a day, through duets, a solo, and a fast-paced, climactic ensemble. Other works span the company's history, from "Decisive Moment" (2005), inspired by the photography of Henri Cartier-Bresson, to "Past/Present" (2001), about leaving the past behind. (155 Mercer St. 212-334-7479. July 13-16 at 8.)

TAP CITY
The lineup for "Tap Internationals," at this year's New York City Tap Festival, includes Japan's Kazu Kumagai and the sublime French-Japanese duo Tapage; "Tap Forward" is a grab bag featuring Barbara Duffy's tight ensemble and the wild man Omar Edwards; and "Tap and Song" revives the dormant vaudeville connections between tap, comedy, and a snappy tune. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. July 14-15 and July 18 at 7 and 9:30 and July 16 at 3 and 7. Through July 22.)

STEPHEN PETRONIO COMPANY
At Central Park SummerStage, the troupe reprises two works from its spring season, both set to Rufus Wainwright tunes. "Bloom," performed with the Young People's Chorus of New York City, pairs Petronio's characteristic quick-wheeling movement with exuberant lyrics from Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. In "Bud Suite," the surprisingly tender connections between the dancers contrast with the fierce, agitated steps. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 212-360-2777. July 14 at 8.)

PILOBOLUS
For its thirty-fifth anniversary, the troupe now known for its high-production-value spectacles celebrates its hippie origins with a revival of "Pilobolus," the quirky trio created in 1971 by the Dartmouth undergrads Steve Johnson, Moses Pendleton, and Jonathan Wolken. That little dance, named for a tiny fungus that can send its spores eight feet, launched a commercial powerhouse that has had plenty of its own offshoots (including Momix, Martha Clarke, BodyVox, and Peter Pucci Plus). The opening-night bill at the Joyce also features three repertory pieces and the New York première of the new "Memento Mori," a wry examination of youthful fantasies about growing old. (175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. July 17 at 8. For a complete schedule, see www.joyce.org. Through Aug. 12.)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OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW
Suzanne Farrell's young ballet company's première program at the Ted Shawn Theatre includes two sultry duets that Balanchine made for her—one from the rare and jazzy "Clarinade" (1964), the other from her Gypsy-themed comeback piece, "Tzigane" (1975)—as well as his effulgent evocation of French Romantic ballet, "La Source" (1968), and his exquisite "Divertimento No. 15" (1956), created for and best seen on, as here, a small stage. In the Doris Duke Theatre, Israel's Emanuel Gat Dance offers "Winter Voyage" and "The Rite of Spring" (see listing above). The following week, Mexico City's Tania Pérez-Salas brings three of her extravagantly theatrical creations—covering the stage with water, showering it with sand, sewing together the dresses worn by three dancers. And San Francisco's Robert Moses returns with a fistful of urgent political works. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. July 5-16. For a complete schedule, see www.jacobspillow.org. Through Aug. 26.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC: "SUMMERTIME CLASSICS"
July 5-6 at 7:30: The Philharmonic's series of light-classics concerts, under the direction of the avuncular Bramwell Tovey, delves deeply into Americana with music by Bernstein, Aaron Jay Kernis (the snappy "New Era Dance"), Copland ("Lincoln Portrait," narrated by F. Murray Abraham), and Gershwin ("Rhapsody in Blue," in a very personal interpretation by the exciting jazz pianist Marcus Roberts). ♦ July 7-8 at 8: The young pianists Benjamin Hochman and Orion Weiss make their Philharmonic débuts in a program that features Ravel's "Bolero," Rimsky-Korsakov's "Capriccio Espagnol," and Saint-Saëns' "Carnival of the Animals" (with Tovey speaking Ogden Nash's narration). (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC CONCERTS IN THE PARKS
The orchestra's annual round of free parks concerts begins with an evening of festive brass music performed by the gentlemen of the Philharmonic. (P.N.C. Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J. July 10.) ♦ The second program offers works by Tchaikovsky (the Violin Concerto, with Jennifer Koh making her Philharmonic début) and Dvořák (the Symphony No. 8); Xian Zhang, the orchestra's accomplished associate conductor, leads the concert. (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 11. ♦ Great Lawn, Central Park. July 12. ♦ Cunningham Park, Queens. July 13. ♦ Snug Harbor, Staten Island. July 14. ♦ Heckscher State Park, East Islip, Long Island. July 15. ♦ Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. July 17.) ♦ For a finale, Marin Alsop conducts Adams's "The Chairman Dances," Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 1 (with another talented débutante, Leila Josefowicz), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. (Great Lawn, Central Park. July 18.) (All concerts begin at 8. No tickets required. For more information, call 212-875-5709.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL: "GRENDEL"
This ambitious operatic transformation of John Gardner's novel inspired by the Beowulf legend (directed by Julie Taymor, with music by Elliot Goldenthal, an outrageously complex set by George Tsypin, and a libretto by Taymor and J. D. McClatchy) opened to very mixed reviews at Los Angeles Opera last month—which only makes its New York première all the more enticing. Eric Owens, Denyce Graves, Richard Croft, and Raymond Aceto lead the cast; Steven Sloane conducts. (New York State Theatre. 212-721-6500. July 11, July 13, and July 15-16 at 7:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
A concert by the Sequenza Trio (the violinist Mark Kaplan, the cellist Adrian Brendel, and the pianist

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Yael Weiss) is one of the highlights at the floating chamber-music series in the next two weeks; they perform Schubert's magnificent Piano Trio No. 2 in E-Flat Major along with works by Haydn, Martinů, and Paul Chiara. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. July 15 at 7:30 and July 16 at 4. For full schedule, see www.bargemusic.org.)

INTERNATIONAL KEYBOARD INSTITUTE AND FESTIVAL
The Mannes School of Music, long regarded as a fine conservatory, is emerging as a locus for the kinds of concert that interestingly combine the educational and the exploratory. Jerome Rose's series is such an event; it begins with the man himself at the piano, offering a recital of works by Mozart, Chopin, Schumann (the Sonata No. 2 in G Minor), and Paul Schoenfield ("Intermezzo," a world première). (150 W. 85th St. 212-580-0210, ext. 4858. July 16 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

LAKE GEORGE OPERA: "OUR TOWN"
The first professional-grade performances of Ned Rorem's opera (based on the Wilder play, with a libretto by J. D. McClatchy) continue, in a week that also includes performances of **"Pagliacci"** and **"The Barber of Seville."** (Spa Little Theatre, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 518-587-3330. July 5 and July 9 at 1. For full schedule, see www.lakegeorgeopera.org.)

BERKSHIRE OPERA COMPANY
The hardy festival opens its season with an all-Mozart evening featuring arias and ensembles from "Le Nozze di Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and the other great operas, sung (with orchestra) by an impressive lineup of singers: Maureen O'Flynn, Christine Goerke, Mark Schowalter, and Troy Cook. (Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, Great Barrington, Mass. 413-442-0099. July 5 at 8.)

TANGLEWOOD
A mere selection of the concerts offered by the supreme music festival of the summer. July 6 at 8:30: Garrick Ohlsson, a witty and athletic player, extends his survey of the Beethoven piano sonatas (which continues through the next two weeks), with a concert that includes the Sonatas No. 1 in F Minor and No. 17 in D Minor ("Tempest"). ♦ July 7 at 8:30: James Levine, sidelined by injury for several months, returns to his adventurous journey with the Boston Symphony Orchestra by conducting two symphonies: Beethoven's valedictory Ninth (featuring the soprano Sondra Radvanovsky and the bass-baritone John Relyea, among others, and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus) and Schoenberg's revolutionary First (for chamber orchestra). ♦ July 8 at 8:30: In the first of two concerts with the B.S.O., Bernard Haitink conducts music by Ravel, Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 22 in E-Flat Major, with Emanuel Ax), Debussy (the "Prèlude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune"), and Roussel. ♦ July 11 at 8:30: Three powerhouse players—the violinist Gil Shaham, the cellist Truls Mørk, and the pianist Yefim Bronfman—perform the Schubert piano trios. ♦ July 14 at 8:30: At the onset of a demanding weekend, Levine conducts the B.S.O. in Schoenberg's awesome oratorio "Gurrelieder"—an evening-long farewell to Romanticism—with a cast of vocal soloists that includes Christine Brewer, Waltraud Meier, and Johan Botha. ♦ July 15 at 8:30: Levine returns, bringing his consummate operatic skills to a semi-staged performance of **"Elektra."** Brewer is Chrysothemis; Felicity Palmer is Klytemnestra; Lisa Gasteen takes the title role. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200. For full schedule, see www.bso.org.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL
July 6 at 7:30: The excellent Jupiter String Quartet performs works by Mozart, Dvořák (the final Quartet in G Major, Op. 106), and Paul Schoenfield in the lovely confines of the Spanish Courtyard. ♦ July 8 at 8: Will Crutchfield's first bel-canto presentation this summer is Bellini's **"I Puritani,"** a semi-staged production in the Venetian Theatre that will feature the tenor Barry Banks and the soprano Sumi Jo, one of the world's leading coloratura acrobats. (Note: Jo returns in an all-Mozart program on July 16.) ♦ July 14 at 8: Several of chamber music's A-list professionals—including the pianist Anne-Marie McDermott and the cellist Peter Wiley—who play under the name of Opus One offer piano quartets by Mozart (in E-Flat Major), Dvořák, and the persuasive contemporary master George Tsontakis. ♦ July 15 at 8: The world première of John Musto's Piano Concerto No. 1—performed by the composer, an extraordinarily gifted pianist—is the centerpiece of a program with Michael Barrett and the Orchestra of St. Luke's that also features works by Beethoven and Schumann (the "Spring" Symphony). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252. For full schedule, see www.caramoor.org.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
The Northeast's leading summer opera company begins its schedule, with operas running in repertory through August. July 7 and July 15 at 8 and July 9 at 1:30: Megan Monaghan, Anthony Laciura, and Chad A. Johnson lead the cast of Gilbert and Sullivan's **"Pirates of Penzance"**; Stewart Robertson conducts. ♦ July 8 at 8 and July 10 and July 16 at 1:30: The mezzo-soprano Katharine Goeldner plays the ingénue Rosina in Rossini's deathless **"Barber of Seville,"** in a production led by David Angus. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

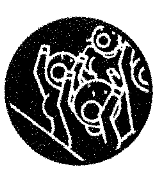
MAVERICK CONCERTS
An elegant and unusual concert offered by the pianist Babette Hierholzer—which will feature not only solo works by Mozart and Schumann but also Milhaud's "L'Album de Madame Bovary," with the actress Mary Louise Wilson and the conductor Alexander Platt reading excerpts from the novel—begins a two-week period that also includes appearances by the cellist Felix Fan and the Borromeo String Quartet. (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217. July 8 at 6.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL
July 8 at 8: The Yale School of Music's summer festival awakens with a concert by the lyrical Vermeer Quartet, which (with the pianist Boris Berman) offers performances of works by Haydn, Shostakovich (the Quartet No. 10 in A-Flat Major), and Dohnányi. ♦ July 15 at 8: The Keller Quartet, a stimulating Hungarian ensemble, performs Haydn's "Seven Last Words of Christ." (Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000. For full schedule, see www.yale.edu/norfolk.)

MUSIC MOUNTAIN
Two up-and-coming quartets grace the festival's stage in the coming weeks. July 9 at 3: The Chiara String Quartet, along with the pianist Daniel Epstein, surveys works by Mozart (the "Dissonant" Quartet), Beethoven, and Dohnányi (the Piano Quintet No. 1). ♦ July 16 at 3: The Daedalus String Quartet performs music by Mozart, Bartók, and Dvořák (the Piano Quintet, with Melvin Chen). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126.)

MARLBORO FESTIVAL
For more than half a century, some of the world's greatest musicians—and their extremely talented students—have trooped up to a little college campus in Vermont each summer to study and absorb the masterworks of the Germanic classical tradition. Programs are announced a week in advance at www.marlboromusic.org. (Marlboro, Vt. 802-254-2394. July 15 at 8:30 and July 16 at 2:30.)

POP NOTES
PET SOUNDS



We go to songs for the truth, to hear timeless verities that we do not express in our day-to-day lives. For example: "We all have holes in our socks, and Bad Brains totally rocks." Cautious, well-dressed adults might hesitate before singing these words, but those people are just dumb. Be Your Own Pet are four teen-agers from Nashville (one seventeen, two eighteen, one freshly nineteen) who sound exactly as old as they are. Their style is basic punk rock played fast and loose but skillfully, with an eye to getting things right, even when falling apart feels like fun. The Buzzcocks come to mind more than once over the course of listening to Be Your Own Pet's thirty-three-minute, eponymously titled début album (Ecstatic Peace). Songs do not usually make it to the three-minute mark, and even live shows average under half an hour. The drummer, Jamin Orrall, has the confidence and drive of someone at least four years older, though more attention will be paid to Jemina Pearl, the bottle-blond lead shrieker. She sounds like Kathleen Hanna, the singer of Bikini Kill and the Elvis Presley to a generation or two of young women in rock. After several songs, the debt is repaid and Pearl becomes her own creation.

The band's concerns are not as explicitly political as Bikini Kill's, for starters: bicycles are good ("we're on two wheels, baby!"), and being an adventurer is also to be encouraged ("we are adventuring, we are adventurers!"). There is a Platonic wholeness to Be Your Own Pet's frantic exuberance. If you were to imagine four kids impossibly excited by playing in a rock band and singing about everything that crosses their minds, your conceptual band would likely resemble Be Your Own Pet. "I've never had this much fun, I've never had my own gun," Pearl sings in "Thresher's Flail." Metaphor or not, it works both ways.

—*Sasha Frere-Jones*

MOVIES OPENING

CHANGING TIMES
André Téchiné directed this drama, about a French engineer (Gérard Depardieu) who seeks out his former lover (Catherine Deneuve) in Tangiers. In French and Arabic. Opening July 14. (Paris.)

EDMOND
A drama, written by David Mamet, about a family man who flees to the seamy side of New York. Starring William H. Macy. Directed by Stuart Gordon. Opening July 14. (Quad Cinema.)

EXCELLENT CADAVERS
Marco Turco directed this documentary, about two Italian prosecutors who brought Sicilian mafiosi to trial. In Italian. Opening July 12. (Film Forum.)

GABRIELLE
Isabelle Huppert and Pascal Greggory star in this drama, directed by Patrice Chéreau, about a troubled marriage in Belle Époque France. Opening July 14. (IFC Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HEADING SOUTH
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening July 7. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

KILL YOUR IDOLS
A documentary about the New York No Wave music scene of the late nineteen-seventies. Opening July 7. (Cinema Village.)

LITTLE MAN
Marlon Wayans and Shawn Wayans star in this comedy, directed by Keenen Ivory Wayans, about a man who mistakes a short criminal for his newly adopted son. Opening July 14. (In wide release.)

ONCE IN A LIFETIME
A documentary, directed by Paul Crowder and John Dower, about the New York Cosmos soccer team in the nineteen-seventies. Opening July 7. (Sunshine Cinema.)

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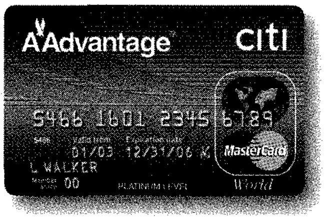

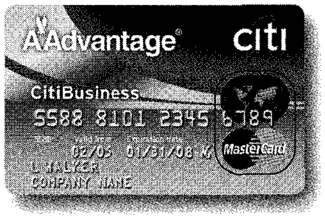

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PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST
Gore Verbinski directed this adventure sequel, starring Johnny Depp, Orlando Bloom, and Keira Knightley. Opening July 7. (In wide release.)

A SCANNER DARKLY
Reviewed below in Now Playing. Opening July 7. (In wide release.)

TIME TO LEAVE
A drama, directed by François Ozon, about a photographer (Melvil Poupaud) who is diagnosed with terminal cancer. In French. Opening July 14. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

YOU, ME AND DUPREE
Owen Wilson stars in this comedy as the unwanted guest of a newlywed couple (Matt Dillon and Kate Hudson). Directed by Anthony Russo and Joe Russo. Opening July 14. (In wide release.)

NOW PLAYING

THE BREAK-UP
This romantic comedy, directed by Peyton Reed, stars Vince Vaughn, looking a little paunchy, as a hyperarticulate Chicago tour guide with loutish habits, and Jennifer Aniston, looking great naked from the rear, as an art-gallery saleswoman who wants peace and order. They buy a condo together, and quarrels ensue—many quarrels, some of them nicely sustained. The snippy-snappy dialogue is good enough to make you regret that the movie wasn't better thought out as a piece of comic construction. The main trouble: what each one does professionally never feeds into the plot, so we are left, again and again, with nothing but the Relationship. Eventually, the two run out of arguments, and the movie turns earnest and dull, but there are good bits nonetheless.—*David Denby* (In wide release.)

CARS
The new Pixar project depicts an America populated wholly by cars. They do not merely cram the roads; they run the gas stations and the diners, too. Owen Wilson, tacking between the smarmy and the plaintive, provides the voice of Lightning McQueen—a cocky, friendless race car who, after a bunch of mishaps, winds up in a small town and there, with the help of some newfound companions, finds his purpose in life. All of which is a reminder that Pixar is a subsidiary of Disney. The digital detailing is often astonishing, but much of the sly wit that perked up "Toy Story" and "The Incredibles" seems to have drained away, and, in the end, the strain of having to care about the fate of grinning automobiles is just too much.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/19/06.) (In wide release.)

CLICK
A high-concept, low-execution comedy, starring Adam Sandler as an overworked family man who is given a remote control that can fast-forward, pause, and rewind his complicated life. The film is supposed to be family-friendly, but the director, Frank Coraci, laces the comic situations with frat-boy humor (such as Sandler fast-forwarding to the future and ogling his daughter's breasts) that seems more inappropriate than funny. Sandler's lacklustre delivery enervates the entire film which, for all of its back-and-forth movement, is stuck on pause.—*Bruce Diones* (In wide release.)

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (In wide release.)

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS: TOKYO DRIFT
The third in a series about sexy boys and their supercharged cars stars Lucas Black as a reckless rebel who, after a drag race gone wrong, flees to Tokyo to live with his father. There he discovers the thrill of drift racing (rocketing a car sideways by gunning the engine and hitting the brakes at the same time) with a group of yakuza wannabes. The story is boilerplate misunderstood-teen drama, with macho posturing and rainy-night sulking, but the director, Justin Lin, films the vehicular stunts with verve and precision. In Japanese and English.—*B.D.* (In wide release.)

HEADING SOUTH
In Haiti, in the late nineteen-seventies, three middle-aged women from North America regularly show up at a minor beach resort in search of sexual companionship with young Haitian men. The awkward subject, rarely explored, could have been played for sensation or squalor. Instead, the writer and director, Laurent Cantet, deals with it plainly and candidly: the women want release, the men want money—but they also want the attention and respect that they don't get in their violent and careless society. The strongest passages are straight-into-the-camera monologues by two of the women (Charlotte Rampling and Karen Young) describing their response to the touch of a handsome nineteen-year-old (Ménothy Cesar). With Louise Portal. In French and English.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

NACHO LIBRE
The story is just an excuse for Jack Black to jump around. He's Ignacio (Nacho), a corn-chip-fed cook at a school for Mexican orphans run by elderly monks. He looks great in thick curly hair and a mustache, his dark eyes glinting with the dirtiest thoughts entertained by any religious functionary since Rasputin. To make money for the orphanage, and to win the love of a pure and chaste nun, he puts on a cape and mask in the style of Mexican wrestling (*lucha libre*), links up with a skinny thief (Héctor Jiménez) to form a tag-team pair, and heads for the arena. There are many wrestling matches in mock-*lucha* style, which become, for some of us at least, as boring as actual wrestling. Directed by Jared Hess.—*D.D.* (6/26/06) (In wide release.)

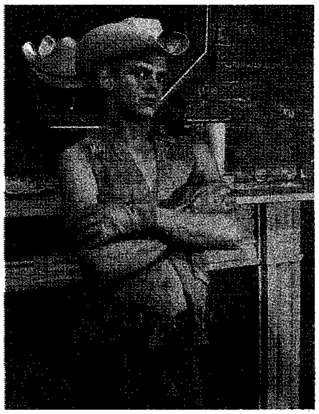
130 FILMS BY LOUIS AND AUGUSTE LUMIÈRE
Made between 1895 and 1900, these brief, unedited strips may not be the first films, but they are the first art films—specifically, works of Impressionism. The various subjects, including workers leaving the Lumière factory, a table of card players, a rowboat plying jagged ocean waves beneath the gaze of silhouetted women on the dock, even the staged comedy of a gardener splashed with his own hose, preserve the settings, gestures, styles, and dappled light immortalized by the painters of modern life. But most of all, the brothers recorded the first acts of cinematic self-consciousness, which went Impressionism one better. If new technologies take hold through their power to simulate a miracle, the Lumière brothers' marvellous gadget produced the illusion that it captured not just reality but the divine act of creation itself, and that the province of art was now open to any who would merely rent the Lumière brothers' camera/projector—for which these silent clips served as advertisements.—*Richard Brody* (Anthology Film Archives; July 16.)

THE ROAD TO GUANTÁNAMO
Michael Winterbottom and Mat Whitecross's film about three real-life British nationals mistakenly imprisoned at Gitmo is confusingly told and possibly disingenuous (the men's account of how they wound up in Afghanistan, where they were captured, doesn't make much sense), but the scenes of suffering and humiliation—of the prisoners being hammered by their American guards and interrogators—are both convincing and hellish to sit through. The prisoners aren't allowed the slightest authority as human beings—and certainly not the authority of innocence. The movie cuts back and forth between a reënactment of the events (with nonprofessional actors) and interviews with the actual young men, which are completely unrevealing.—*D.D.* (6/26/06) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

A SCANNER DARKLY
The director Richard Linklater digitally photographed Philip K. Dick's 1977 futuristic-nightmare novel as a movie with actors, then turned the images into animation, adding oscillating colors and shadows. The effect is to make the material—with its paranoid fears about mind-destroying drugs—even more menacing and strange. Keanu Reeves is the dissolving hero, a narc who takes on the personality of an addict, Robert Downey, Jr., is his weirdly overexplicit sidekick, Woody Harrelson is a hysterical goof, and Winona Ryder is a user who may be playing a double game. Some of the movie is startlingly funny,

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK
A WILDER WEST

Richard Prince is one of the art world's most successful rude boys, catapulting material from Pop's outer limits—dumb ads, bad jokes, autographed head shots, biker mags—onto museum walls. His work often gives off a whiff of the mad collector, so it's appropriate that his funkiest and most devilish show in years is spread throughout a store that stocks rare books, John McWhinnie at Glenn Horowitz Bookseller. Here, in a group of altered paintings, framed assemblages, and small collages, Prince returns to two frequent subjects, cowboys and nurses.


RICHARD PRINCE, DETAIL FROM "UNTITLED (ALMOST ORIGINAL)" (2005)

In almost every case, the work involves the crude juxtaposition of appropriated material, including gouaches of original paperback-cover art with snippets of hard- and soft-core porn. Prince's hand, always deliberately careless, is especially freewheeling in collages that subvert the wholesome covers of nurse romances: a doctor is abruptly nude from the waist down; the smiling Harbor Nurse grabs huge, disembodied breasts. And pop culture's repressed urges find their ideal champion.

—*Vince Aletti*

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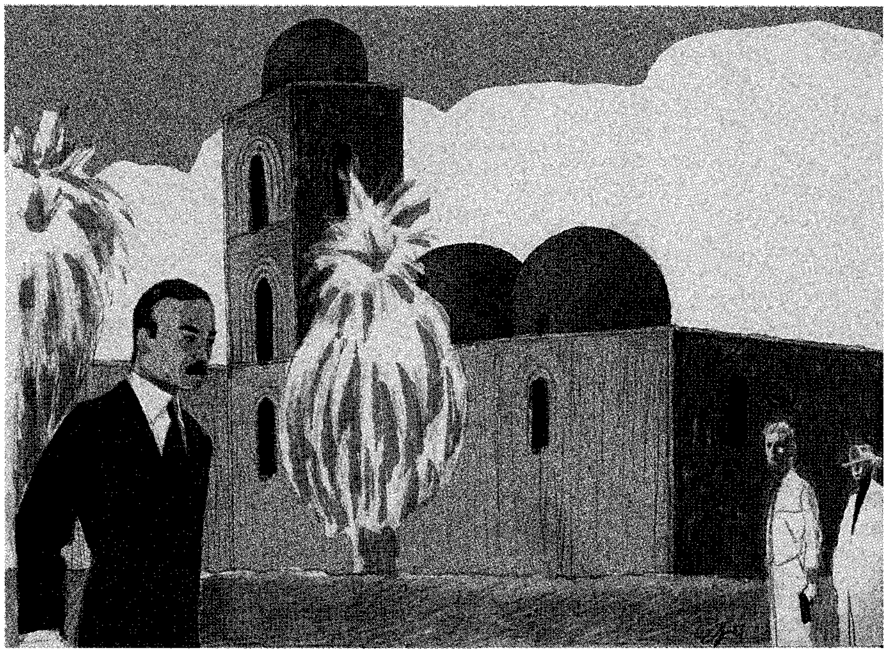
but it luxuriates in a kind of hip despair that may wear out a viewer well before the end.—*D.D.* (In wide release.)

STRANGERS WITH CANDY
This hilarious prequel to the offbeat Comedy Central series stars Amy Sedaris as the profoundly odd Jerri Blank, an ex-prostitute who returns home after a thirty-two-year jail sentence and decides that she must go back to high school, where she left off, and find a way to be special. The plot may be thin—Jerri aligns herself with a couple of nerds who are determined to win the science fair and thus secure funding for the school—but the ridiculous characters, created by Sedaris, Paul Dinello (who also directed), and Stephen Colbert (who plays a closeted, religious science teacher), are so deeply felt, and the language and gags so sly, that the plot doesn't really matter. Sedaris, with mercurial comedic prowess, insinuates each incident of dejection (there are many) with a glimmer of truth, and then, as the reliably oblivious Jerri, bounces back and starts anew.—*Shauna Lyon* (In wide release.)



Two Italian prosecutors fight the Mafia in the documentary "Excellent Cadavers."

IGORT

SUPERMAN RETURNS
After a lengthy interlude, the Man of Steel is back. His mission to cleanse the world of evil remains as unswerving as ever, as does his belief that the addition of eyeglasses constitutes a deep disguise. In Bryan Singer's film he is played by Brandon Routh, who appears to be under instructions to deliver his finest impersonation of Christopher Reeve. Also present are Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth), who has gained a child but lost much of her zip and wit, and Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey), whose plan to hatch a new landmass made of crystal seems unwieldy even by his standards. The story jerks and drags along, with holes where the funny lines are meant to be, plus a number of enigmas (the true father of Lois's son, for instance) that come across as merely confusing. Nevertheless, comic-book fans will gorge themselves on the set pieces and on the now familiar sight of Spacey playing the devil—silken of voice, bare of morals, and infinitely bored.—*A.L.* (7/3/06) (In wide release.)

Also Playing

AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH: In wide release (6/12/06). **THE LAKE HOUSE:** In wide release. **WAIST DEEP:** In wide release. **WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR?:** In wide release.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5181)—Selected screenings. July 7 at 8: "Echoes of Silence" (1965, Peter Emanuel Goldman). ♦ July 13: "Fidel" (1980, John Zorn; silent). ♦ July 15 at 6: "The Brig" (1964, Jonas Mekas). ♦ Films by Jack Smith. July 14 at 7:30: "No President" (1968) and short films. ♦ July 14 at 9:30: "I Was a Male Yvonne De Carlo" (1968) and "Midnight at the Plaster Foundation" (c. 1975). ♦ July 15 at 8: "Normal Love" (1963). ♦ Through July 23: The films of Michael Haneke. July 14-18 at 7: "71 Fragments of a Chronology of Chance" (1994; in German). ♦ July 14 at 9:15: "The Seventh Continent" (1989; in German). ♦ July 15 at 4:45: "Benny's Video" (1992; in German). ♦ July 15 at 9:15: "Funny Games" (1997; in German). ♦ July 16 at 4:30: "Code Unknown" (2000; in French). ♦ July 16 at 9:15: "The Piano Teacher" (2001; in French). ♦ July 17 at 9:15: "Time of the Wolf" (2003; in French). ♦ July 18 at 9:15: "Caché (Hidden)" (2005; in French). ♦ "Essential Cinema." July 16 at 5:30: "130 Films by Louis and Auguste Lumière" (†).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100)—"Special Soccer Night." July 6 at 6:50: "Goal Dreams" (2005, Jeffrey Saunders and Maya Sanbar), followed by a Q. & A. with the directors. ♦ Films by Thomas Allen Harris. July 9 at 2 and 9:15, July 10 at 9:15, and July 11 at 6:50: "That's My Face" (2002). ♦ July 9 at 4:30, July 10 at 6:50, and July 11 at 4:30: "Vintage: Families of Value" (1995). ♦ Special screening. July 12 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Violent Saturday" (1955, Richard Fleischer). The 6:50 screening is followed by a discussion with critic Elliott Stein. ♦ "Great Villains in Cinema." July 13 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Dracula" (1931, Tod Browning). ♦ July 14 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:15: "Psycho" (1960, Alfred Hitchcock). ♦ July 16 at 3, 6, and 9: "Rebecca" (1940, Hitchcock).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. between 40th and 42nd Sts. (212-768-4242)—Through Aug. 21: HBO Bryant Park Film Festival. Lawn opens at 5; screening begins at dusk. July 10: "Bullitt" (1968, Peter Yates). ♦ July 17: "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through July 20: The films of Billy Wilder. Selected screenings. July 5 at 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, and 9:30: "The Lost Weekend" (1945). ♦ July 7-8 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Sunset Blvd." (1950). ♦ July 9 at 1, 5:30, and 10: "The Seven Year Itch" (1955). ♦ July 9 at 3:05 and 7:35: "Kiss Me, Stupid" (1964). ♦ July 10 at 1, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, and 10: "One, Two, Three" (1961). ♦ July 11 at 1:15, 5:20, and 9:25: "Midnight" (1939, Mitchell Leisen). ♦ July 11 at 3:10 and 7:15: "Ninotchka" (1939, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ July 12 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Stalag 17" (1953). ♦ July 13 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes" (1970). ♦ July 14-15 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Ace in the Hole" (1951). ♦ July 16 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Apartment" (1960). ♦ July 17 at 1:15, 4, 6:45, and 9:30: "Irma la Douce" (1963).

FRENCH INSTITUTE ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—In revival. All films are in French. July 11 at 12:20, 4, and 7: "La Guerre des Boutons" (1962, Yves Robert). ♦ July 18 at 12:30, 4, and 7: "Small Change" (1976, François Truffaut).

IFC CENTER
323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (212-924-7771)—"Waverly Midnights." July 7-8: "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" (1975, Jim Sharman). ♦ Special screening. July 8-9 at 11 A.M.: "The Phantom Tollbooth" (1970, Chuck Jones, Abe Levitow, and Dave Monahan). ♦ The films of Akira Kurosawa. July 14-16 at noon: "Stray Dog" (1949; in Japanese).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480)—Selected screenings. "Janet Gaynor: A Centennial Celebration." July 5 at 6 and July 9 at 3:30: "The Farmer Takes a Wife" (1935, Victor Fleming). ♦ July 5 at 8 and July 9 at 5:30: "Small Town Girl" (1936, William Wellman). ♦ July 6 at 6: "Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans" (1927, F. W. Murnau; silent). ♦ July 6 at 8: "7th Heaven" (1927, Frank Borzage; silent). ♦ July 7 at 6: "Street Angel" (1928, Borzage; silent). ♦ July 7 at 8: "Lucky Star" (1929, Borzage; silent). ♦ July 8 at 1: "Ladies in Love" (1936, Edward H. Griffith). ♦ July 8 at 3 and July 12 at 6: "A Star Is Born" (1937, Wellman). ♦ July 8 at 5:15: "The Young in Heart" (1938, Richard Wallace). ♦ Through July 21: "Another Wave: Global Queer Cinema, Part One." July 5 at 6 and July 8 at 2: "The River" (1997, Tsai Ming-Liang; in Mandarin). ♦ July 5 at 8:30 and July 8 at 4:30: "Young Soul Rebels" (1991, Isaac Julien). ♦ July 6 at 6 and July 9 at 5:30: "Bugis Street" (1995, Yonfan). The July 6 screening will be introduced by the director. ♦ July 7 at 8 and July 15 at 4:30: "Head On" (1998, Ana Kokkinos). ♦ July 9 at 3:30 and July 14 at 6: "Lan Yu" (2001, Stanley Kwan; in Mandarin). ♦ July 10 at 6 and July 13 at 8: "Water Drops on Burning Rocks" (2000, François Ozon; in French) and "Prince of Peace" (1993, Hans Scheugl; in German). ♦ July 12 at 8:15: Videos by Ximena Cuevas (1998-2005). ♦ July 15 at 6:45: "Tropical Malady" (2004, Apichatpong Weerasethakul; in Thai). ♦ Through July 23: "Première Brazil!" All films are in Portuguese. July 13 at 6, July 14 at 8, July 15 at 2, July 16 at 3, and July 17 at 6:30: "Two Sons of Francisco" (2005, Breno Silveira). ♦ July 13 at 8:30: "Dancing in Utopia" (2006, Marcelo Santiago). ♦ July 15 at 4:30: "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus). ♦ July 15 at 7: "Vinicius" (2005, Miguel Faria, Jr.).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—"Independence World Cinema Showcase." July 7-9 and July 14 at 7:30 and July 12-13 at 1:30: "Guernsey" (2005, Nanouk Leopold; in Dutch). ♦ The films of Stanley Kubrick. July 8-9 at 1:30: "The Shining" (1980). ♦ July 8-9 at 4:30: "Eyes Wide Shut" (1999).

PIONEER THEATRE
155 E. 3rd St. (212-591-0434)—Selected screenings. July 5-6 at 7: "Hubert Selby, Jr.: It/ll Be Better Tomorrow" (2005, Michael W. Dean and Kenneth Shiffrin). ♦ July 5-11 at 9 and July 12 and July 14 at 7: "Urbanscapes" (Lorena Luciano and Filippo Piscopo). ♦ July 11 at 7: "Where Are They Now?" (2005, Rico Speight). ♦ July 12-18 at 9: "The Color of Olives" (2006, Carolina Rivas; in Arabic).

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SUNSHINE CINEMA
143 E. Houston St. (212-330-8182)—“Sunshine@Midnight.” July 7-8: “Plan 9 from Outer Space” (1959, Edward D. Wood, Jr.; colorized) and short films. ♦ July 14-15: “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” (1988, Robert Zemeckis).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—In revival. July 8-9 at 4: “And Now for Something Completely Different” (1971, Ian MacNaughton). ♦ July 8-9 at 5:45: “Brazil” (1985, Terry Gilliam). ♦ July 8-9 at 8:15: “Dr. Strangelove” (1964, Stanley Kubrick). ♦ July 15-16 at 4: “The Wizard of Oz” (1939, Victor Fleming). ♦ July 15-16 at 6: “Singin’ in the Rain” (1952, Stanley Donen). ♦ July 15-16 at 8: “An American in Paris” (1951, Vincente Minnelli).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Selected screenings. The films of Benoît Jacquot. Except where noted, all films are in French. July 6 at 2:30 and 8:30: “Écrire” (1993) and “The Death of the Young English Aviator” (1993). ♦ July 6 at 4:15 and July 8 at 9: “Sade” (2000). ♦ July 6 at 6:30: “Adolphe” (2002). ♦ July 7 at 2 and 6:30 and July 10 at 3:45 and 8:20: “The Musician Killer” (1974). ♦ July 7 at 4:20 and 9 and July 8 at 2:15 and 6:45: “Pas de Scandale” (1999). ♦ July 8 at 4:30: “Jacques Lacan’s Psychoanalysis, Part One” (1974) and “Numbers and Neurons” (1990). ♦ July 9 at 2 and July 11 at 2:15: “Princess Marie” (2003). ♦ July 9 at 8: “Tosca” (2001). ♦ Through July 20: “Heroic Grace: The Chinese Martial Arts Film, Part II.” Except where noted, all films are in Cantonese. July 12 at 2:30 and 6:30 and July 15 at 4:30: “King Boxer” (1972, Chung Chang-wha). ♦ July 13 at 2:30 and July 15 at 6:45: “The Magic Blade” (1976, Chu Yuan). ♦ July 13 at 6:30 and 9: “House of Flying Daggers” (2004, Zhang Yimou; in Mandarin). ♦ July 14 at 4 and 8:45 and July 16 at 4:45: “My Young Auntie” (1980, Lau Kar-leung). ♦ July 16 at 2:30 and July 17 at 2:30 and 6:30: “Legendary Weapons of China” (1982, Lau). ♦ July 16 at 9: “Clans of Intrigue” (1977, Chu). ♦ July 17 at 4:30 and 8:30 and July 18 at 1: “The Jade Tiger” (1977, Chu). ♦ July 18 at 3: “Dirty Ho” (1979, Lau). ♦ Special screening. July 5 at 7: “A Scanner Darkly” (†), followed by a discussion with the actor Robert Downey, Jr., the writer Jonathan Lethem, the director, Richard Linklater, and others.

READINGS AND TALKS

"PARK LIT"
The roving reading series in the city’s parks settles down in Red Hook, as the literary review *The Believer* presents an evening with Gretta Cohn, Brandon Stosuy, Elisabeth Vincentelli, Devin McKinney, Sarah Manguso, and Deb Olin Unferth. (The Backyard Garden, Van Brunt St. at Hamilton Ave., Brooklyn. For more information, call 212-696-6609. July 5 at 6:30.)

"BASEBALL'S MANY LIVES"
Lawrence Hogan reads from his book “Shades of Glory: The Negro Leagues and the Story of African-American Baseball,” and Roger Kahn, the author of “Boys of Summer,” reads from his memoir, “Into My Own: The Remarkable People and Events that Shaped a Life.” Bob Scott, who pitched for the New York Black Yankees, will also be on hand. (Madison Square Park, Fifth Ave. at 25th St. 212-538-6667. July 6 at 6:30.)

CYNTHIA OZICK
The writer discusses her latest book, “The Din in the Head: Essays.” (Barnes & Noble, 240 E. 86th St. No tickets necessary. July 12 at 7.)

92ND STREET Y
Ruth Reichl, the editor of *Gourmet*, joins the writers Ann Patchett, David Rakoff, and Jane and Michael Stern, all of whom contributed to the latest issue of the magazine, for a talk about food. Leonard Lopate is the moderator. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-425-5500. July 13 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

BROOKLYN FISHING CONTEST
A great deal has changed in Kings County since 1947, but one constant is this annual children’s competition, in Prospect Park. Equipment is provided, along with prizes for the lucky ones. (Prospect Park Audubon Center at the Boathouse. July 12-16, from 10 to 4. For more information, call 718-287-3400, ext. 114, or vist www.prospect-park.org.)

NEWTOWN CREEK CRUISE
The mostly idle tidal arm of the East River that forms the boundary between Queens and Brooklyn (perhaps familiar to some as that bit of water beneath the B.Q.E.’s Kosciusko Bridge) was once one of the busiest waterways in the nation. It was lined with copper- and zinc-smelting plants and oil refineries that left a lasting toxic residue. The neighborhoods on its edges, Hunters Point and Greenpoint, have begun to gentrify, but Newtown Creek has yet to be reclaimed. On July 16 at 9:30 A.M., the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment takes an up-close look. “It’s like a little hidden valley,” the tour’s leader, Jack Eichenbaum, a geographer, says. “People have no idea what’s in there.” (For more information, call 718-788-8500, ext. 208.)

Guy Davis and others will perform at the Lincoln Center Out of Doors festival.

JASHAR AWAN

ON THE HORIZON

MOVIES
KEEN ON KINO
July 24-Aug. 10

Rarely screened treasures are on view in Anthology Film Archives’ series of films distributed by Kino International, including F. W. Murnau’s silent classic “Faust”; Roberto Rossellini’s portrait of Rome during wartime, “Open City”; Sergei Paradjanov’s mystical masterwork “The Color of Pomegranates”; and Manoel de Oliveira’s “A Talking Picture,” one of the few great films about the post-9/11 world. (212-505-5181.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
GOOD NIGHT
Aug. 3 and Aug. 5

The Mostly Mozart Festival offers “A Little Night Music,” a series of late-night concerts that begins with programs offered by the pianist Garrick Ohlsson and by the violinist Gidon Kremer, who will be appearing with members of his chamber orchestra, Kremerata Baltica. (212-721-6500.)

ART
ON THE GRID
Aug. 3-March, 2007

“Developing Awareness: Agnes Martin’s Paintings from the 1980s” is the fourth installment in Dia: Beacon’s ongoing multiyear survey of the minimalist (1912-2004), best known for her delicate white paintings. (845-440-0100.)

NIGHT LIFE
FRESH AIR
Aug. 4-27

Next month, the Lincoln Center Out of Doors festival brings music from around the world to the plazas of the Upper West Side cultural institution. The performances are free, and the lineup includes the jazz saxophonist Sonny Rollins, the blues guitarist Guy Davis, and the legendary calypsonian Mighty Sparrow. (www.lincolncenter.org.)

THE THEATRE
ON THE EDGE
Aug. 11-27

The tenth annual Fringe Festival, which in the past has spawned such cheeky and subversive hits as “Urinetown,” “Matt and Ben,” “Debbie Does Dallas,” and last fall’s “Dog Sees God,” showcases a hundred and ninety new works, many from returning playwrights. (www.fringenyc.org.)

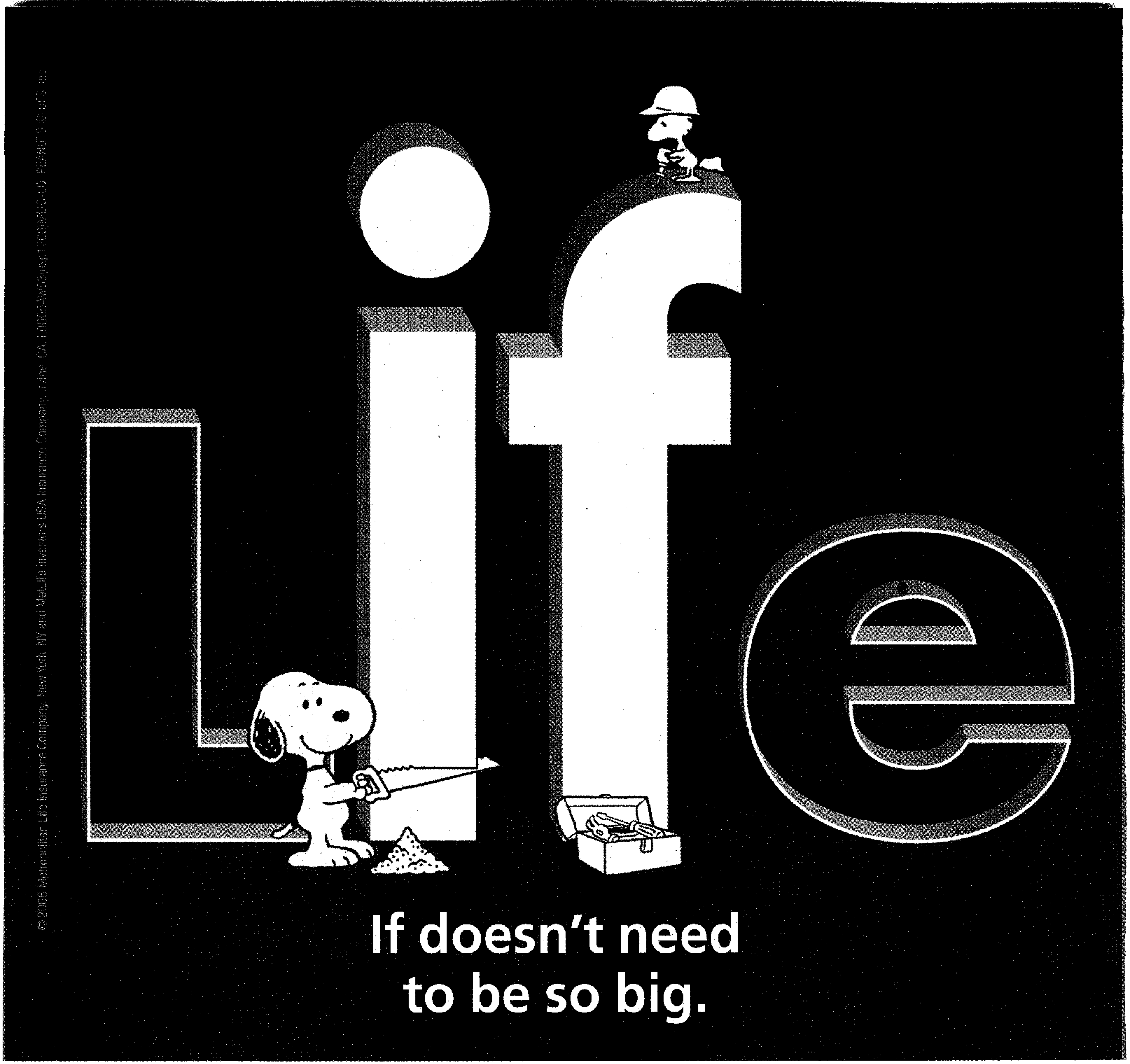
THE FINE ART OF DRESSING

GOOD SEASONS

Good Seasons
The Fine Art of Dressing
Good Seasons
ITALIAN
VINAIGRETTE WITH
EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
Dressing

Good Seasons

ITALIAN VINAIGRETTE WITH EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL DRESSING. WITH AMBER HUES AND SPLASHES OF RED, EACH BITE IS A COMPLEX INTERPLAY OF HEARTY GARLIC, SWEET PEPPERS, AND EXOTIC OREGANO. A ROBUST FLAVOR WITH A LONG, RICH FINISH. NOT UNLIKE YOUR SALADS.



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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

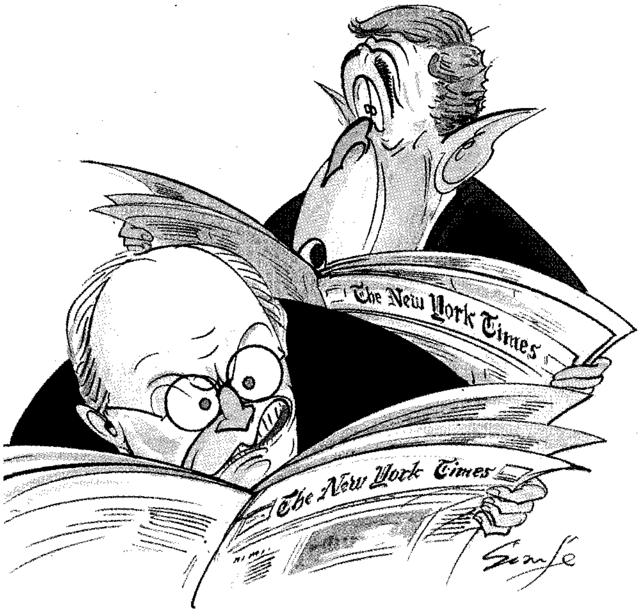
COMMENT
NATTERING NABOBS

In the fall of 1969, Richard Nixon surveyed his domestic enemies and appointed Spiro T. Agnew, his Vice-President, to the post of White House Torquemada. There would come a day, not far off, when Agnew would have to plead nolo contendere to a charge of tax evasion, which would force his resignation and replacement by Gerald Ford, but this was his moment. Wielding a rhetorical style that might be described as "surrealist-alliterative," Agnew denounced opponents of the war in Vietnam as "an effete corps of impudent snobs"—as "ideological eunuchs," "professional anarchists," and (strangely, wonderfully) "vultures who sit in trees." Never before or since has a populist attack come swathed in such purple raiment.

Nixon could not fail to be impressed. And so he dispatched Agnew to map out a cultural description of another enemy, the op-ed unfriendlies and the network mandarins of what was beginning to be called the media. The views of "this little group of men" who "live and work in the geographical and intellectual confines of Washington, D.C., or New York City," Agnew noted darkly, "do not represent the views of America." He inscribed himself in history, and in famous-quotation anthologies, forever, when he said, "In the United States today, we have more than our share of nattering nabobs of negativism. They have formed their own 4-H club—the hopeless, hysterical hypochondriacs of history."

The exuberant playfulness of Agnew's language (as scripted by William Safire) seemed to signal that the bluster need not be taken too seriously. But the campaign against the nabobs took fearsome legal shape when, in the summer of 1971, Nixon appealed to the Supreme Court to stop publication of the Pentagon Papers. After the *Times* started printing excerpts of the secret, internal study of how the United States went to war in Indochina, Nixon told Henry Kissinger, "People have gotta be put to the torch for this sort of thing"—and then demanded an injunction for prior restraint. Further publication of the Papers, the White House argued, would compromise codes, threaten the safety of the nation, and shatter diplomatic relations with foreign countries. None of that happened. Meanwhile, the Court sided with the First Amendment. As Justice Hugo Black wrote, "The guarding of military and diplomatic secrets at the expense of informed representative government provides no real security for our Republic."

Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and others in the Nixon-Agnew-Ford orbit left Washington believing that the imperial Presidency had been disastrously hobbled by a now imperial press. When they reappeared in 2001, under the auspices of George W. Bush, the Nixon-Agnew spirit was resurrected with them—this time without the Joycean wordplay. More than any other White House in history, Bush's has tried to starve, mock, weaken, bypass, devalue, intimidate, and deceive the press, using tactics far



GERALD SCARFE

more toxic than any prose devised in the name of Spiro Agnew.

Firm in the belief that the press can be gored for easy political gain, the Bush Administration has set about reducing the status of the media (specifically, what it sees as the left-wing, Eastern-establishment media) to that of a pesky yet manageable interest group, nothing more. As Andrew Card, the White House chief of staff at the time, told this magazine's Ken Auletta, "They"—the media—"don't represent the public any more than other people do. In our democracy, the people who represent the public stood for election. . . . I don't believe you have a check-and-balance function."

In the past six years, the Administration and its surrogates have issued a stream of disinformation about intelligence and Iraq; paid friendly "columnists" like Armstrong Williams and Maggie Gallagher tens of thousands of dollars to parrot the White House line; accredited to the White House press corps a phony journalist and ex-prostitute (Jeff "Bulldog" Gannon, a.k.a. James Dale Guckert) as a reliable pitcher of softball questions; tightened Freedom of Information Act restrictions; and pioneered a genre of fake news via packaged video "reports." The President has held fewer solo news conferences than any of his modern predecessors. The Vice-President kept the *Times* reporter off his plane because he didn't like the paper's coverage. The atmosphere, in general, has been one of crude manipulation and derision. After Seymour M. Hersh published, in this magazine, his third article on the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in as many weeks, the Pentagon spokesman Lawrence DiRita, overlooking the truth of the reports, publicly declared that Hersh merely "threw a lot of crap against the wall and he expects someone to peel off what's real." (Hersh's articles, he said, composed a "tapestry of nonsense.")

In recent months, the critique has grown more ominous. Cheney and other officials have attacked Dana Priest's article in the Washington *Post* detailing the rendition of prisoners to secret jails in Europe and James Risen and Eric Lichtblau's articles in the *Times* describing the government's attempt to fight terrorism with warrantless domestic wiretaps. Aping the spirit, if not the élan, of his predecessor, Cheney called the articles disloyal, damaging to national security, and undeserving of the Pulitzer Prizes they won.

Late last month, the *Times* published a long report by Lichtblau and Risen on the C.I.A.'s and the Treasury Department's monitoring of an international banking database in Brussels to track the movement of funds by Al Qaeda. The *Wall Street Journal* and the Los Angeles *Times* very quickly followed with their own articles on the government's monitoring of Al Qaeda's financial transactions, which has been an open secret ever since it was trumpeted by—well, by George W. Bush, in mid-September, 2001. Infuriated that the editors of the *Times* had not acceded to blandishments to kill the story, Bush and Cheney, in a coördinated offensive, described the *Times* report as a disgrace and, outrageously, as a boon to further terror attacks.

The ideological noise machine took it from there. A congressman, Peter King, and a senator, Jim Bunning, both Republicans, accused the *Times* of treason. King, whose contradictory nature once embraced the violent activities of the I.R.A., is now the chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security. Curiously, it was King who, in September of 2004, co-chaired a hearing so that a Treasury official could tell the world how the department's programs were driving terrorists out of the banking system; now he speaks of employing the 1917 Espionage Act to investigate and try journalists. Last week, the House approved a resolution condemning the newspapers that published the banking story for placing "the lives of Americans in danger." The resolution passed 227–183, almost completely along party lines. On the airwaves and in the blogosphere, it got uglier. Melanie Morgan, a shouter on northern California's biggest talk radio station, told the San Francisco *Chronicle* that if Bill Keller, the executive editor of the *Times*, "were to be tried and convicted of treason, yes, I would have no problem with him being sent to the gas chamber."

The Bush Administration can't really believe that these newspaper stories have undermined the battle against Al Qaeda; what's more, it knows that over the decades papers like the *Times* have kept many stories and countless particulars secret when editors saw that it was in the interest of national security and military safety to do so. The *Times* banking story disclosed no leads, named no targets. To say that it risked lives is like saying that an article revealing that cops tap phones to monitor the activities of the Mafia is a gift to the Five Families of New York.

The Bush Administration knows very well what it is doing and in what climate. The press—particularly the mainstream outlets the White House finds most irritating—is in a collective state of anxious transition, hurt by scandals (Congressman King was quick to mention Jayson Blair, the *Times* serial fabulist), by the appearance of a blizzard of new technologies and ideologized alternatives like Fox News, and by a general sense of economic, even existential, worry. The era of hegemonic networks and newspapers, of supremely confident Bradlees and Rosenthals, is a memory.

In the wake of the Administration's record of dishonesty and incompetence in Iraq and the consequent decline in the President's domestic polling numbers, it is not hard to discern why the White House might find a convenient enemy in the editors of the *Times:* this is an election year. The assault on the *Times* is a no-lose situation for the White House. The banking story itself showed the Administration to be doing what it had declared it was doing from the start: concertedly monitoring the financial transactions of potential terrorists. At the same time, by smearing the *Times* for the delectation of the Republican "base," the Administration could direct attention away from its failures, including, last week, the Supreme Court's decision to block its plans to try Guantánamo detainees before military commissions.

In the era of the Pentagon Papers, a war-weary White House went to the courts to stifle the press. You begin to wonder if the Bush White House, in its urgent need to find scapegoats for the myriad disasters it has inflicted, is preparing to repeat a dismal and dismaying episode of the Nixon years.

—David Remnick

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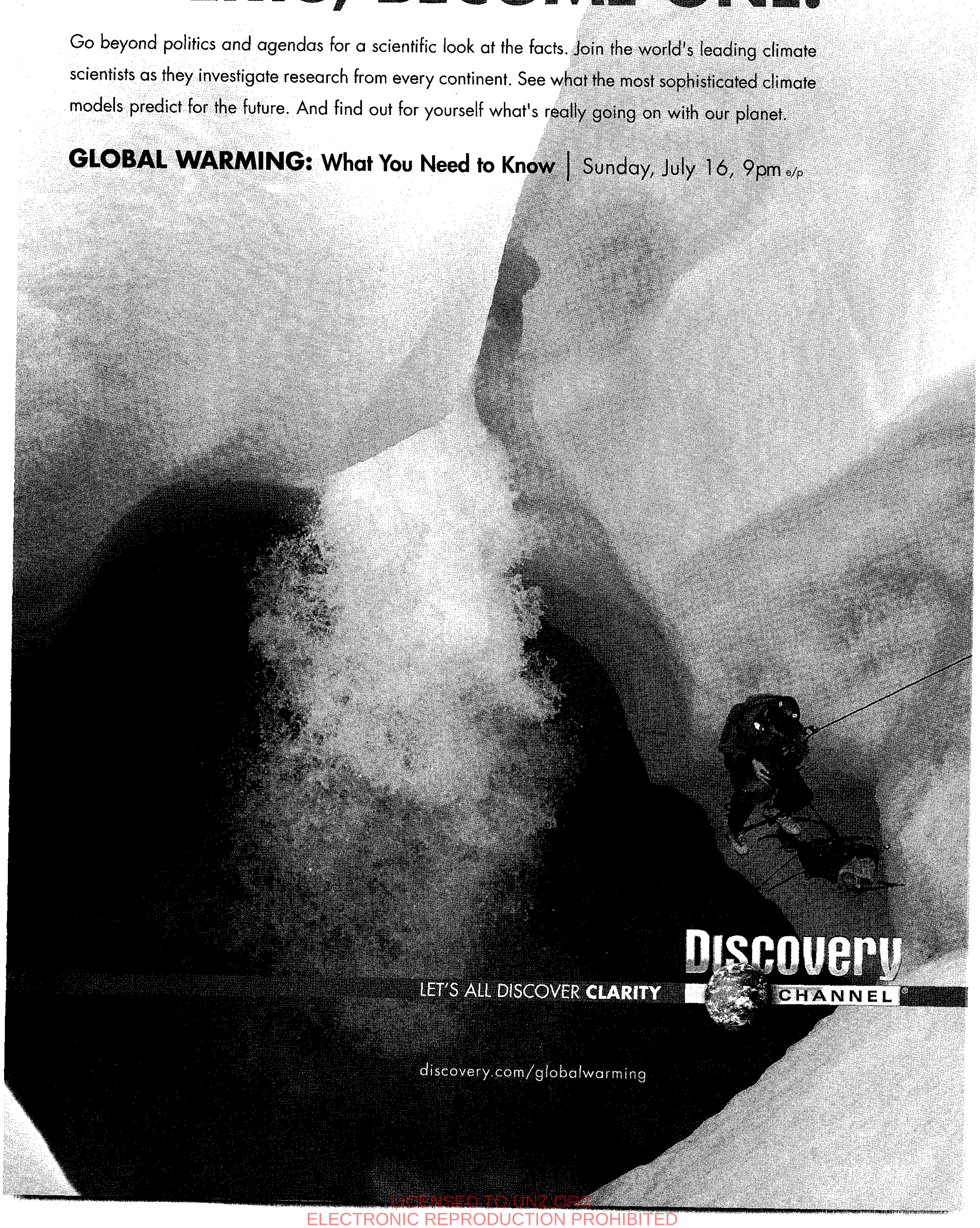
GLOBAL WARMING: What You Need to Know | Sunday, July 16, 9pm e/p



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"THERE'S NO PROBLEM TO BEGIN WITH."

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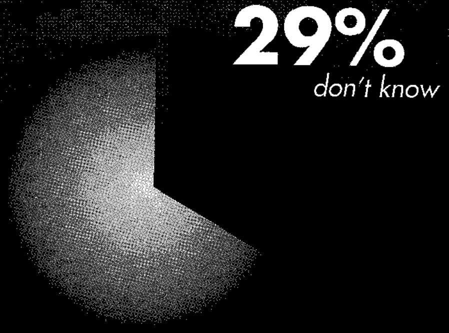
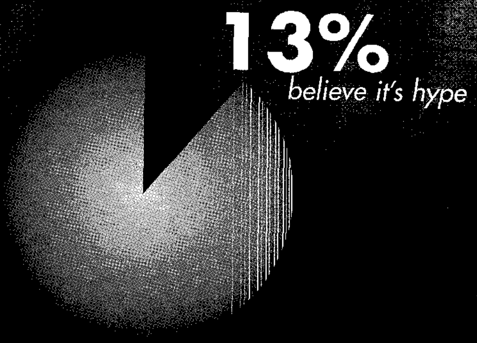
[illegible] in heated [illegible] haven't become [illegible] what's fiction. We [illegible] asked Americans about the issue of global warming — and the results may surprise you.



29% of those polled say they "don't know" if temperatures are increasing or who to believe on the issue.

Nielsen Entertainment Television



13% are unconvinced that global warming is occurring and believe that the idea is just media hype.

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Global Warming: What You Need to Know

Hosted by Tom Brokaw. Sunday, July 16, 9PM e/p

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THE PICTURES
READY, SET, RAMPLE

If you had an hour in a hotel suite, alone with Charlotte Rampling, to talk about sex, what would you ask her? For forty years, the British actress, whose name has become a verb ("to rample"—ensorcell with an enigmatic gaze) and the title of a rock song by Kinky Machine ("I always wanted to be your trampoline," they sing to her), has specialized in fatally obsessed, perverse, smoldering, reckless, and unmoored women. She has played the survivor of a concentration camp who engages in sadomasochistic sex with her former torturer, in "The Night Porter"; a waifish "basket case," in "Stardust Memories"; and a widow in pathological denial of her husband's death—a probable suicide—in "Under the Sand." "I generally don't make films to entertain people," Rampling said. "I choose the parts that challenge me to break through my own barriers. A need to devour, punish, humiliate, or surrender seems to be a primal part of human nature, and it's certainly a big part of sex. To discover what normal means, you have to surf a tide of weirdness."

Rampling, who has lived in France since the early seventies and has become, in essence, a French movie star, was in New York to promote her latest film, "Heading South," directed by Laurent Cantet. In it, she plays Ellen, a brittle, sardonic fifty-five-year-old spinster (Rampling herself is sixty) who teaches French literature at Wellesley, and spends long summer vacations at a Haitian resort shacking up with a beautiful local beach boy named Legba. It is a story about sexual tourism—Legba is a gigolo—set under the squalid regime of Baby Doc Duvalier, and the hotel is a swingers' club, of sorts, for well-heeled white women. Ellen is their "queen bee," a gossip and a manipulator who pretends serenely that it costs her nothing to share Legba's favors with a harem. "None of the deeply disturbing characters I've played were as unnatural to me as this one," Rampling said. "I find it infuriating that a beautiful, smart woman

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GIVING AWAY MY FORTUNE

In case you haven't heard, I recently caused a stir by announcing that I would be giving away eighty-five per cent of my personal fortune, an amount that, according to my most recent SavingsPlus™ statement, adds up to $6,327.83. This figure, of course, doesn't include moneys that I am owed in the coming fiscal month; nor does it reflect outstanding debts to various private individuals and business entities whose fixation on the bottom line has apparently blinded them to the value of warm collegial relations.

In the days since news of my gift was posted on my Facebook page, many people have asked me, "Why are you doing this?" Two reasons. First, I'm in my forties now, and, even taking into account the years lost to depression, panic disorder, post-adolescent angst, and computer solitaire, I've racked up nearly a decade of gainful employment. I'm ready to step down, kick back, and let the young go-getters bash it out among themselves. Enjoy, fuckers. Also, freelance journalism is, let's face it, a very lucrative field—a soft, sweet, long dollar—and it's time to give something back. In the interests of transparency and of compliance with I.R.S. regulations, here is a list of the charitable organizations that will benefit from my largesse.

Because of my commitment to ending global inequity, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will receive the lion's share of my fortune, some $3,261.06. Part of this gift will be in stock (one share of Green Giant, the company that makes frozen vegetables, given to me at birth as a joke) and part in tangible assets. Specifically: a Dell Inspiron 8100 notebook computer that I bought in the winter of 2002. I am hoping that this excellent machine will help an underprivileged child in a developing nation bridge the digital divide and dare to dream—perhaps of changing his name from Deepak to Brad and getting a job at the Dell technical-support call center. The collection of punk, seventies soul, and heavy-metal downloads in my iTunes library (sorry, Bill!) will offer Brad a unique window on Western culture.

My bequest would be meaningless if it didn't reflect my lifelong support for the world of arts and letters. I remember how much a kind word and a financial leg up would have meant. I am reminded of this every day by my friend Alex Shimmel, an aspiring novelist whose only income in the past twenty years, as far as I can tell, has come from a stint at Kim's Video in 2002 and two album reviews that he wrote for *Rolling Stone* in the late eighties. I have pledged $250 to allow Alex to finish his sci-fi epic, of which he has so far written three thousand two hundred and twelve pages. In return, I get fifty per cent of everything, including movie and ancillary rights. He has also agreed to rename his studio apartment in Red Hook the Adam D. Green Pavilion.

A long-standing concern for the environment led me to earmark $600 for Greenpeace. Normally, I resent being hectored for money as I walk down the street, but something about Greenpeace's wavy-haired spokesperson Megan Conover—who, having just finished her sophomore year at UMass Amherst, is spending the summer soliciting donations from passersby in lower Manhattan, while wearing a cutoff T-shirt, denim shorts, Birkenstocks, and several toe rings—made me stop and listen. In the end, Megan's eloquence on the fate of the earth's fragile ecosystems persuaded me to make a $50 pledge. By the time I discovered that I had committed to a recurring monthly charge on my Visa card for a full year, and that the home phone number she gave me was for a bodega on Avenue C, it was too late.

On a similar note: I'm not normally a traitor to my country, but you know how when some group or other looking for a handout sends you a sheet of those personalized return-address labels you sort of feel guilted into contributing, as if you owed them something? In any case, I sent $25 to Islamic Jihad.

—*Adam Green*

like Ellen is—at any age—so invisible to the men of her own world that she has to pay."

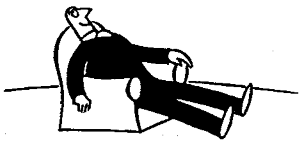
Rampling was having a wraith's breakfast—an espresso and a glass of water—when she answered the door, without makeup or a minder, primly dressed in a white shirt, black trousers, and flats. Age has softened the feline planes of her face, though there is nothing slack about her self-possession. The patrician reserve that serves as a foil for her carnal rapacity in so many roles is a legacy of her upbringing—her father was a British colonel and an Olympic athlete (he won a gold medal in swimming), and her mother was an heiress—although Rampling's personal life has been anything but unperturbed. She suffered, for decades, from the burden of keeping her sister's suicide a secret from their mother; from a breakdown, in the late nineteen-eighties; from a long period of clinical depression; and from the shock of her second husband's betrayal after a marriage of twenty years (she discovered his infidelity with a younger woman in the French tabloids). A new companion, ten years her junior, and critical praise for the films of her middle age helped to restore her equilibrium.

"Heading South" seems to an American like a quintessentially French conceit about colonial predation with the conventional gender roles reversed, though Rampling disagrees. "The women involved are almost all Anglo-Saxons who go south looking for young black or Hispanic men, and it's a huge industry," she said. "The French don't indulge in those kinds of desert-island fantasies"—an assertion that might come as a surprise to the clientele of Club Med. "A vast generation gap between lovers is hardly unheard of in France, but their intimacy is more complex. Watching Jeanne Moreau play the old Duras in 'Cet Amour-Là,' for example, you understand the mutual fascination of a mature woman and a much younger man: she is attracted to his devotion, he to her deep wisdom.

"Age teaches you to accept that you can't share your erotic wisdom," Rampling said. "But on the screen you can open a door to the games and secrets that we hide from each other. Then we're not all so alone."

—*Judith Thurman*

DRESS CODE DEPT.
BAREFOOTIN'



This spring, Mike Wallace's retirement from "60 Minutes" was marked by a spate of tributes, which, while celebrating his august career, inadvertently showcased his more free-spirited side. There he was, on the front page of the *Times*, perched on his staircase in an oxford shirt, slacks, and pterodactyl-like bare feet. And, again, in a *Newsday* article, in stocking feet and using his desk as an ottoman. By the time the May 22nd issue of *People* appeared, featuring a photo of Wallace sprawling unshod on the living-room sofa—a white one!—you had to wonder what was with all the exposure. The sight of his naked extremities felt vaguely taboo, akin to glimpsing F.D.R. in a wheelchair.

It used to be that going barefoot carried, as going bareheaded once did, a whiff of impropriety: you had to have a good excuse, be it socioeconomic (e.g., street urchins, oppressed pregnant ladies), aesthetic (hippies, Lilly Pulitzer), or athletic (waterskiers, Kenyan runners), to let your toes hang out. (Feet can give a lot away: they are the transvestite's Kryptonite.) But if the quintessential shoe-snubber of summers past was Britney Spears—who was famously photographed leaving a gas-station rest room au naturel—then the New Barefooter is a squarer specimen. Like Alex Bogusky, a shoeless subject of a recent *BusinessWeek* cover, entitled "The Craziest Ad Guys in America," he's kicking off his wingtips, not his platform flip-flops.

So, how has corporate America come to be subjected to the corn-and-bunion assailments of those subway ads promising relief for chronic foot pain? Perhaps the pivotal moment was the dot-com boom, when Californians enjoyed a brief period of credibility. A *Time* cover from 1996 featured Marc Andreessen, the co-founder of Netscape, sitting on a gold throne with his jeans rolled up to reveal a pair of large, unkempt paws. "We got all these grossed-out letters," an editor recalled, "saying his toenails were too long."

Another key practitioner was the I.C.M. agent Ed Limato, who, this March, greeted guests at his Oscar party in shirtsleeves and a pedicure, even though it was only fifty-five degrees outside. Limato, it should be noted, used to represent Goldie Hawn, whose long-term boyfriend, Kurt Russell, starred as a striving mailroom employee who joins forces with a chimp in the 1971 Disney movie "The Barefoot Executive." Just last week, in a photo in the *Times Magazine*, the Austrian writer Peter Handke revealed to the world that his second toes are longer than his big ones. But even as far back as 1914 there existed, as James Bain wrote in his treatise "The Barefoot League," a vogue for living shoelessly, in "most real communion with the Innermost o' our cosmic Being."

So much for sociological theories. There was only one thing to do: ask Mike Wallace, who was attending a reception the other night in Manhattan.

TALK OF THE TOWN: Mr. Wallace, this is sort of a stupid question, but why were you on the front page of the *Times* in bare feet?

WALLACE: You know something, I had no idea it was going to wind up where it did. People were fascinated. I'm supposed to be this tough, uptight, abrasive, confrontational character. I guess I was wandering around barefoot and climbed the stairs.

TALK OF THE TOWN: So is it a rule at your house that you have to take your shoes off when you come in the door?

WALLACE: There's no rule, but I take them off damn quick.

[*Wallace picks up a foot, sheds a Sebago penny loafer, size 9½ B, and wiggles his toes around in his dark GoldToe socks.*]

[*Enter Wallace's wife, Mary, with a boot cast on her right leg. Tendinitis.*]

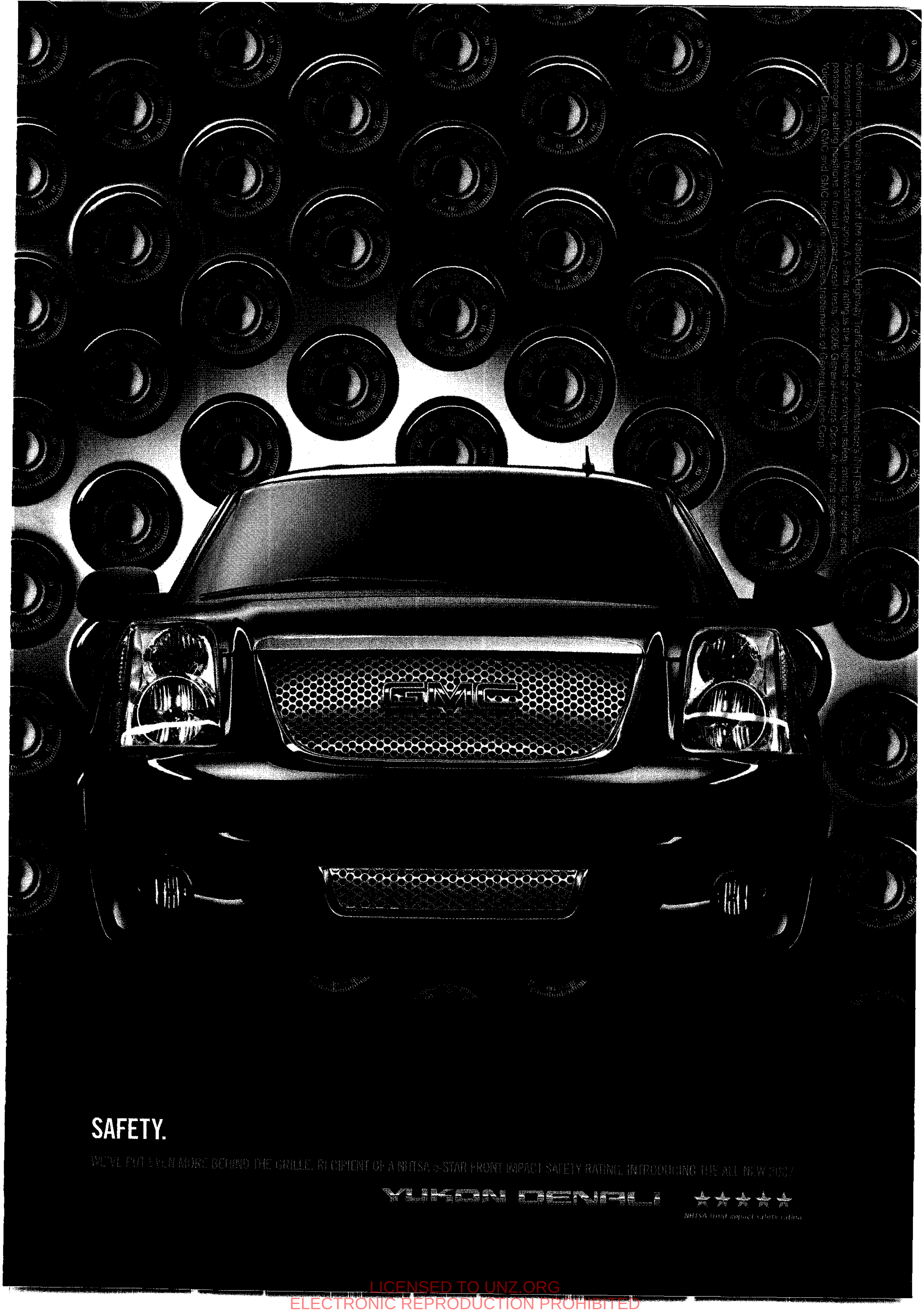
TALK OF THE TOWN: Just asking your husband whether he likes to go barefoot.

MARY: He walks on the beach in his bare feet—that's the best exercise. I love to be barefoot, and right now I can't even move my foot, and I can't wear a shoe.

TALK OF THE TOWN: So, solidarity?

MARY: Well, he has beautiful feet.

—*Lauren Collins*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THE FINANCIAL PAGE
TOO MUCH INFORMATION

When Ben Bernanke took over from Alan Greenspan as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, five months ago, one of his goals was to make the Fed a more open institution. Whereas Greenspan specialized in tortuously oblique sentences parsable only by semioticians—he once said, "Since I've become a central banker, I've learned to mumble with great incoherence"—Bernanke advocated a plainspoken style. If the Fed was clearer about its intentions, he figured, markets would be less volatile. But, instead of smoothing markets, Bernanke's public statements have confused them, earning him a reputation for flightiness, a quality that no one wants in a central banker. He's been called "Blundering Ben" and a "loose cannon," and investors are saying, Will Bernanke please shut up?

Let's hope not. While Bernanke's attempt to open the doors of the Fed wider has had a rocky start, it's the logical next step in a welcome trend toward transparency that started under Greenspan. Until recently, the Federal Reserve's operations were hidden from the public, so successfully that, in 1981, the Fed beat back a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit, asserting that secrecy was indispensable to its operations. The idea that central banks should keep their discussions from the view of mere mortals—known among economists as "monetary mystique"—was seen as fundamental to proper management of the economy. And theorists believed that, for maximum effect, the Fed's decisions ought to come as a surprise.

Over the past twelve years, though, the Fed has been disclosing more information. In 1994, it began announcing publicly whether it had decided to raise interest rates. (Before then, the market simply had to figure out on its own what the Fed was doing.) In 1999, it started including in its statements language that laid out its appraisal of the current state of the economy. And in 2004 it sped up the release of the minutes of its meetings. Few, if any, investors thought these moves were ill-considered. So why does Bernanke's penchant for openness have everyone so agitated?

In part, people are worried simply because Bernanke is replacing one of the best central bankers in history. But their anxiety has been aggravated by the perception that Bernanke has been inconsistent in his commitment to fighting inflation—the Fed's fundamental task. Instead of taking a single inflexible position, Bernanke has offered a nuanced take on whether inflation is becoming a serious problem and on how high the Fed might need to raise interest rates to stop it. At one point, he suggested that the Fed—which has raised interest rates at seventeen straight meetings—might pause before raising them again. But on a later occasion he said that inflation was edging into a range that made him uncomfortable. These are reasonable statements by a policymaker adjusting interpretations to fit new data. But they've been read as the meanderings of a hopeless waffler. Bernanke was first excoriated for being too soft on inflation and is now being criticized for being too tough.

Bernanke has not always been judicious—one of his market-moving statements was an off-the-cuff comment to Maria Bartiromo, of CNBC, at a dinner—but his reputation for flakiness is undeserved. All Fed chairmen have had the experience of seeing markets overreact to their statements. A recent study by two former Fed employees shows that, more than once during Greenspan's tenure, his comments moved the market more sharply than Bernanke has. Furthermore, Bernanke is trying to navigate the economy during a period of tremendous uncertainty. Traditional measures of inflation are high, but wages are barely growing, which indicates that inflation will remain under control. There's also the slowdown in the housing market to consider, and the uncertain impact of our huge budget and trade deficits. Under these conditions, only a dolt would adopt a simple message like "We're going to keep raising interest rates."

But acknowledging uncertainty doesn't play well with the media or the market. Today, the Fed's actions are subject to constant press scrutiny. And it's easier to lure audiences by using labels like "hawk" and "dove" than by exploring the subtleties of forecasting an uncertain future. In theory, investors should look past the headlines to the substance, but if the multitudes are treating the headlines as important news it's hard for any individual investor not to do likewise.

So, for now, one of Bernanke's great strengths—comfort with the uncertain nature of monetary policy—is seen by the market as a weakness. As social scientists have long recognized, we prefer confident statements of fact to probabilistic statements, even when we know that the confidence is illusory. And while Greenspan was also comfortable with uncertainty, his impenetrable rhetoric made it easy to believe that, underneath all the caveats, he really was certain. The less Greenspan said, the more people assumed he knew.

Should Bernanke work on his incoherent mumbling? That cure would be worse than the disease. Bernanke's initial instinct was the right one. Markets may mess up in the short run, but they learn in the long run. A recent study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, for instance, found that the Fed's greater openness since 1999—when it started explaining its decisions and its expectations for the future—has significantly reduced the mistakes that investors make in predicting what the Fed will do, with the result that markets have been less volatile and less risky. People may want to be kept in the dark, but they're ultimately better off when the Fed sheds more light.

—*James Surowiecki*

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

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American Red Cross

The American Red Cross *Welcomes* Magen David Adom to the International Red Cross Movement

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Today, the American Red Cross celebrates Magen David Adom's (MDA) membership in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Since Israel gained Statehood in 1948, the American Red Cross has fought for international recognition of MDA as Israel's equivalent to the Red Cross. To underscore this commitment and encourage action on this issue, the American Red Cross has withheld $45 million in dues to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

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In righting this historic wrong, the American Red Cross is grateful for the courage, resolve and support of so many. We would especially like to thank the Governments of the United States and Switzerland, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, our sister Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and the many organizations and Members of Congress who have been steadfast friends.

For more information on this issue, please visit http://www.redcross.org/mda/.

Bonnie McElveen-Hunter
Chairman, American Red Cross

Noam Yifrach, MD
Chairman, Magen David Adom

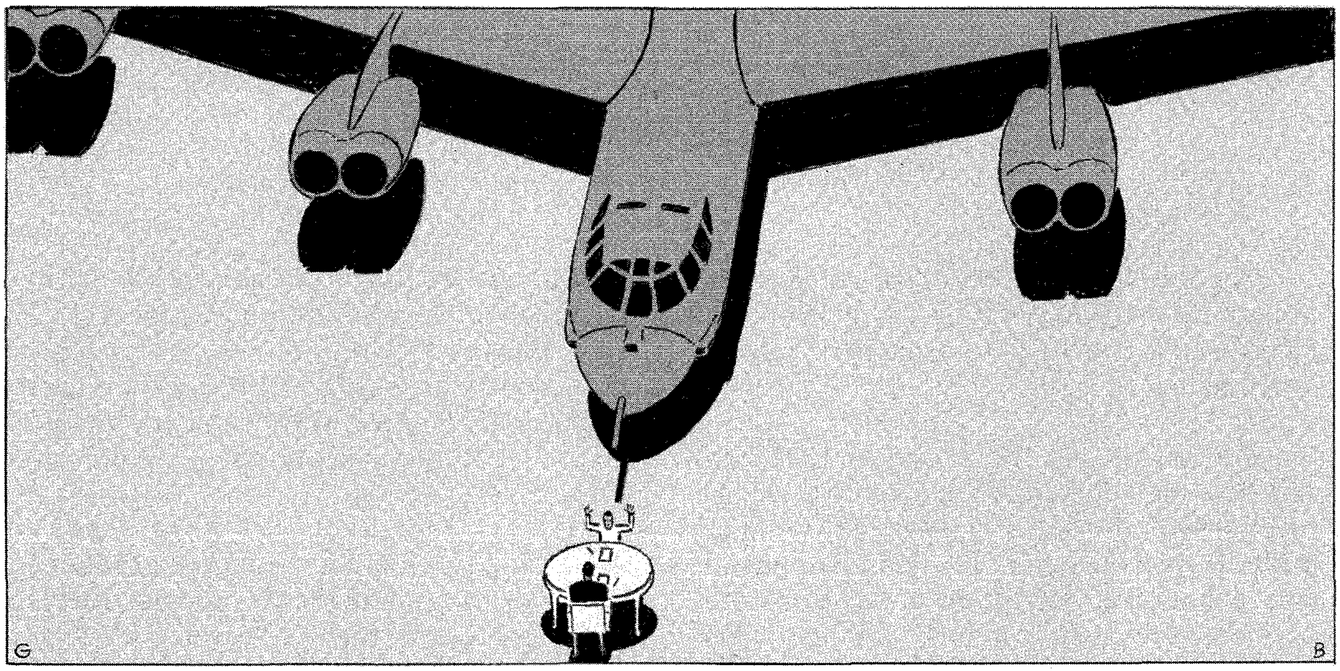
ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

LAST STAND

The military's problem with the President's Iran policy.

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH

On May 31st, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced what appeared to be a major change in U.S. foreign policy. The Bush Administration, she said, would be willing to join Russia, China, and its European allies in direct talks with Iran about its nuclear program. There was a condition, however: the negotiations would not begin until, as the President put it in a June 19th speech at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, "the Iranian regime fully and verifiably suspends its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities." Iran, which has insisted on its right to enrich uranium, was being asked to concede the main point of the negotiations before they started. The question was whether the Administration expected the Iranians to agree, or was laying the diplomatic groundwork for future military action. In his speech, Bush also talked about "freedom for the Iranian people," and he added, "Iran's leaders have a clear choice." There was an unspoken threat: the U.S. Strategic Command, supported by the Air Force, has been drawing up plans, at the President's direction, for a major bombing campaign in Iran.



The commanders are "starting to sense the end of the road," a retired general said. "They don't want to be condemned by history."

GUY BILLOUT

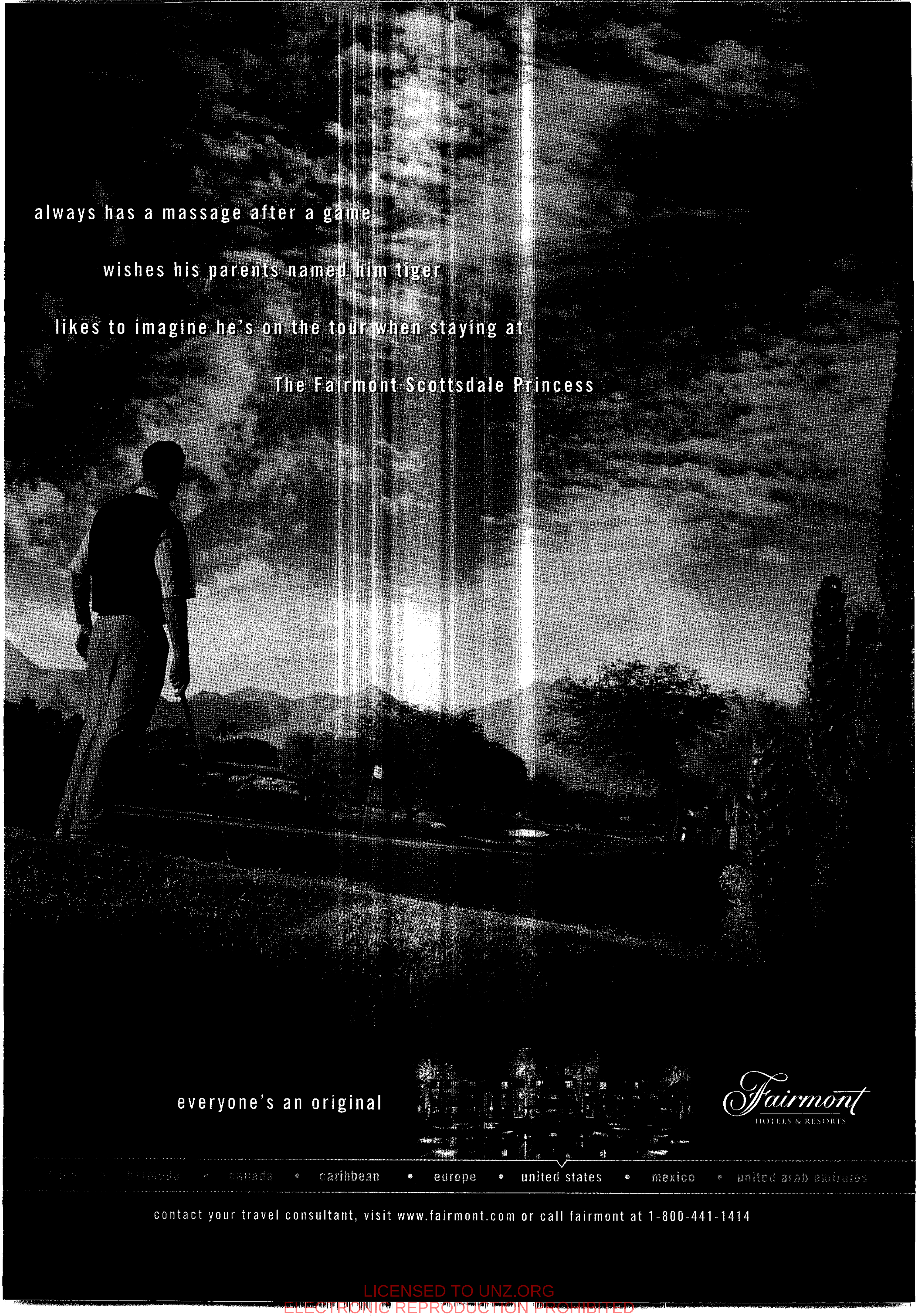
Inside the Pentagon, senior commanders have increasingly challenged the President's plans, according to active-duty and retired officers and officials. The generals and admirals have told the Administration that the bombing campaign will probably not succeed in destroying Iran's nuclear program. They have also warned that an attack could lead to serious economic, political, and military consequences for the United States.

A crucial issue in the military's dissent, the officers said, is the fact that American and European intelligence agencies have not found specific evidence of clandestine activities or hidden facilities; the war planners are not sure what to hit. "The target array in Iran is huge, but it's amorphous," a high-ranking general told me. "The question we face is, When does innocent infrastructure evolve into something nefarious?" The high-ranking general added that the military's experience in Iraq, where intelligence on weapons of mass destruction was deeply flawed, has affected its approach to Iran. "We built this big monster with Iraq, and there was nothing there. This is son of Iraq," he said.

"There is a war about the war going on inside the building," a Pentagon consultant said. "If we go, we have to *find* something."

In President Bush's June speech, he accused Iran of pursuing a secret weapons program along with its civilian nuclear-research program (which it is allowed, with limits, under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). The senior officers in the Pentagon do not dispute the President's contention that Iran intends to eventually build a bomb, but they are frustrated by the intelligence gaps. A former senior intelligence official told me that people in the Pentagon were asking, "What's the evidence? We've got a million tentacles out there, overt and covert, and these guys"—the Iranians—"have been working on this for eighteen years, and we have nothing? We're coming up with jack shit."

A senior military official told me, "Even if we knew where the Iranian enriched uranium was—and we don't—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we don't know where world opinion would stand. The issue is whether it's a clear and present danger. If you're a military planner, you try to weigh options. What is the capability of the Iranian response, and the likelihood of a punitive response—like cutting off oil shipments? What would that cost us?" Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his senior aides "really think they can do this on the cheap, and they underestimate the capability of the adversary," he said.

In 1986, Congress authorized the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to act as the "principal military adviser" to the President. In this case, I was told, the current chairman, Marine General Peter Pace, has gone further in his advice to the White House by addressing the consequences of an attack on Iran. "Here's the military telling the President what he can't do *politically*"—raising concerns about rising oil prices, for example—the former senior intelligence official said. "The J.C.S. chairman going to the President with an economic argument—what's going on here?" (General Pace and the White House declined to comment. The Defense Department responded to a detailed request for comment by saying that the Administration was "working diligently" on a diplomatic solution and that it could not comment on classified matters.)

A retired four-star general, who ran a major command, said, "The system is starting to sense the end of the road, and they don't want to be condemned by history. They want to be able to say, 'We stood up.' "

The military leadership is also raising tactical arguments against the proposal for bombing Iran, many of which are related to the consequences for Iraq. According to retired Army Major General William Nash, who was commanding general of the First Armored Division, served in Iraq and Bosnia, and worked for the United Nations in Kosovo, attacking Iran would heighten the risks to American and coalition forces inside Iraq. "What if one hundred thousand Iranian volunteers came across the border?" Nash asked. "If we bomb Iran, they cannot retaliate militarily by air—only on the ground or by sea, and only in Iraq or the Gulf. A military planner cannot discount that possibility, and he cannot make an ideological assumption that the Iranians wouldn't do it. We're not talking about victory or defeat—only about what damage Iran could do to our interests." Nash, now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, said, "Their first possible response would be to send forces into Iraq. And, since the Iraqi Army has limited capacity, it means that the coalition forces would have to engage them."

The Americans serving as advisers to the Iraqi police and military may be at special risk, Nash added, since an American bombing "would be seen not only as an attack on Shiites but as an attack on all Muslims. Throughout the Middle East, it would likely be seen as another example of American imperialism. It would probably cause the war to spread."

In contrast, some conservatives are arguing that America's position in Iraq would improve if Iran chose to retaliate there, according to a government consultant with close ties to the Pentagon's civilian leaders, because Iranian interference would divide the Shiites into pro- and anti-Iranian camps, and unify the Kurds and the Sunnis. The Iran hawks in the White House and the State Department, including Elliott Abrams and Michael Doran, both of whom are National Security Council advisers on the Middle East, also have an answer for those who believe that the bombing of Iran would put American soldiers in Iraq at risk, the consultant said. He described the counterargument this way: "Yes, there will be Americans under attack, but they are under attack now."

Iran's geography would also complicate an air war. The senior military official said that, when it came to air strikes, "this is not Iraq," which is fairly flat, except in the northeast. "Much of Iran is akin to Afghanistan in terms of topography and flight mapping—a pretty tough target," the military official said. Over rugged terrain, planes have to come in closer, and "Iran has a lot of mature air-defense systems and networks," he said. "Global operations are always risky, and if we go down that road we have to be prepared to follow up with ground troops."

The U.S. Navy has a separate set of concerns. Iran has more than seven hundred undeclared dock and port facilities along its Persian Gulf coast. The small ports, known as "invisible piers," were constructed two decades ago by Iran's Revolutionary Guards to accommodate small private boats used for smuggling. (The Guards relied on smuggling to finance their activities and enrich themselves.) The ports, an Iran expert who advises the U.S. government told me, provide "the infrastructure to enable the Guards to go after American aircraft carriers with suicide water bombers"—small vessels loaded with high explosives. He said that the Iranians have conducted exercises in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow channel linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea and then on to the Indian Ocean. The strait is regularly traversed by oil tankers, in which a thousand small Ira-

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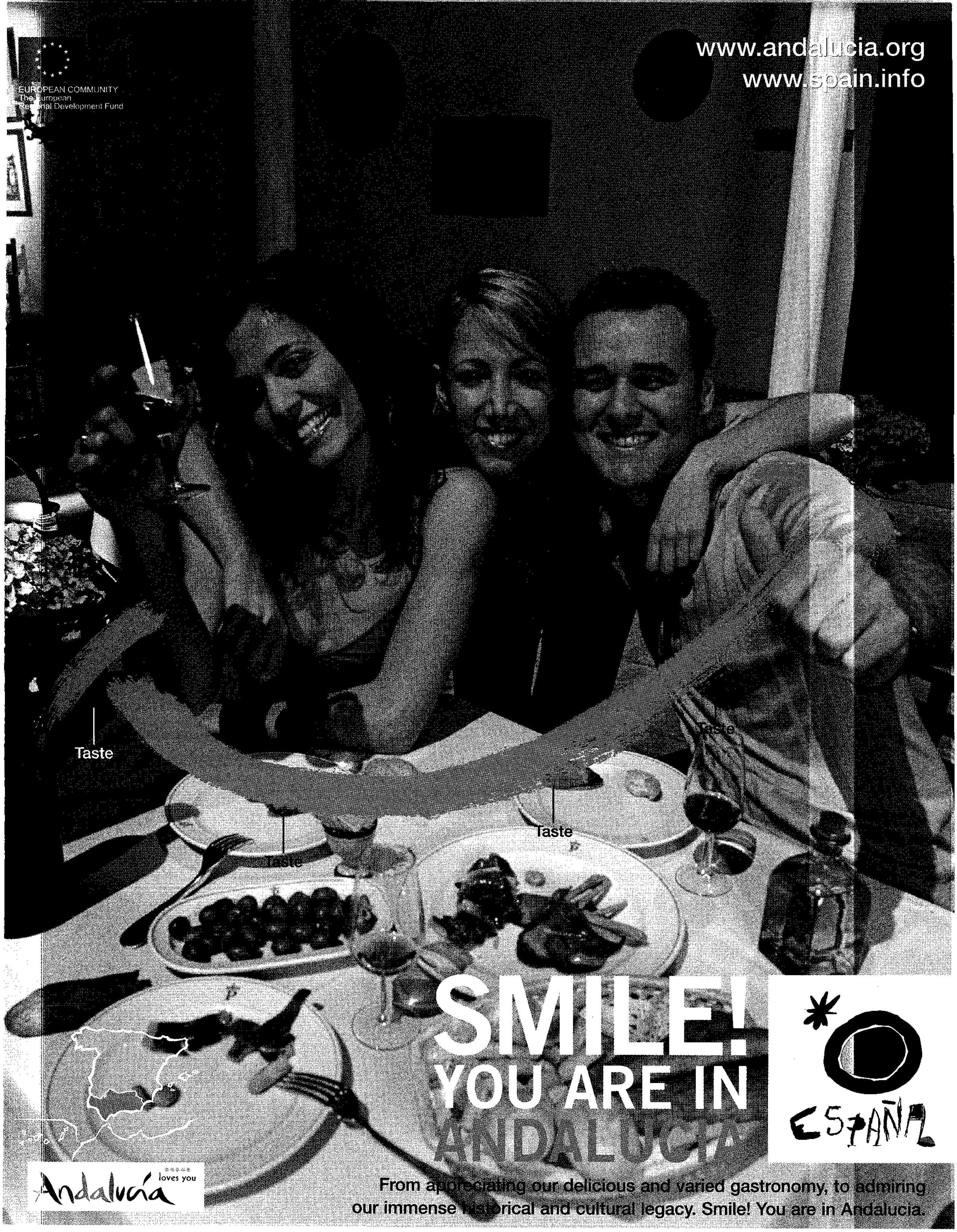
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There is no more authentic place to experience the passionate rhythms of flamenco than in Andalucía, its birthplace. To preserve and celebrate the dance, the region has recently expanded visitors' opportunities to experience this unique cultural treasure.

NEW Flamenco Routes. *Through December 2006, visitors can choose to follow any of five different, five-day dance-intensive itineraries across Andalucía that include discussions, performances, guitar concerts, and demonstrations at no charge.*

Opened this spring in a restored eighteenth-century building in Seville's historic center, the new $4.8-million, three-story **Museum of Flamenco Dancing** was conceived as both a school of dance and a gathering spot for professionals and aficionados. The museum features exhibition galleries and offers performances as well as classes in dance, singing, and Spanish guitar.

The guiding force behind the museum is Cristina Hoyos, world director and choreographer of Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, who has brought her art to audiences for nearly forty years.

The sound and spirit of flamenco resonates in cities across Andalucía this year. The **Cádiz Flamenco Summer Festival** stretches from July into August. Seville will host the fourteenth **Flamenco Biennial** (September 13–October 15). During that time the **World's Fair of Flamenco** (September 27–October 1) also takes place in Seville. This expo showcases industries that support the dance, from fashion to book and music publishers to guitar makers.

Elsewhere in Andalucía, Málaga has more than a hundred flamenco events scheduled through this December. And in 2008 the **City of Flamenco**—incorporating a dance school, museum, auditorium, and research center—will rise in Jerez de la Frontera in a new structure as architecturally dramatic and exciting as the dance itself.

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nian boats simulated attacks on American ships. "That would be the hardest problem we'd face in the water: a thousand small targets weaving in and out among our ships."

America's allies in the Gulf also believe that an attack on Iran would endanger them, and many American military planners agree. "Iran can do a lot of things—all asymmetrical," a Pentagon adviser on counter-insurgency told me. "They have agents all over the Gulf, and the ability to strike at will." In May, according to a well-informed oil-industry expert, the Emir of Qatar made a private visit to Tehran to discuss security in the Gulf after the Iraq war. He sought some words of non-aggression from the Iranian leadership. Instead, the Iranians suggested that Qatar, which is the site of the regional headquarters of the U.S. Central Command, would be its first target in the event of an American attack. Qatar is a leading exporter of gas and currently operates several major offshore oil platforms, all of which would be extremely vulnerable. (Nasser bin Hamad M. al-Khalifa, Qatar's ambassador to Washington, denied that any threats were issued during the Emir's meetings in Tehran. He told me that it was "a very nice visit.")

A retired American diplomat, who has experience in the Gulf, confirmed that the Qatari government is "very scared of what America will do" in Iran, and "scared to death" about what Iran would do in response. Iran's message to the oil-producing Gulf states, the retired diplomat said, has been that it will respond, and "you are on the wrong side of history."

In late April, the military leadership, headed by General Pace, achieved a major victory when the White House dropped its insistence that the plan for a bombing campaign include the possible use of a nuclear device to destroy Iran's uranium-enrichment plant at Natanz, nearly two hundred miles south of Tehran. The huge complex includes large underground facilities built into seventy-five-foot-deep holes in the ground and designed to hold as many as fifty thousand centrifuges. "Bush and Cheney were dead serious about the nuclear planning," the former senior intelligence official told me. "And Pace stood up to them. Then the world came back: 'O.K., the nuclear option is politically unacceptable.' " At the time, a number of retired officers, including two Army major generals who served in Iraq, Paul Eaton and Charles Swannack, Jr., had begun speaking out against the Administration's handling of the Iraq war. This period is known to many in the Pentagon as "the April Revolution."

"An event like this doesn't get papered over very quickly," the former official added. "The bad feelings over the nuclear option are still felt. The civilian hierarchy feels extraordinarily betrayed by the brass, and the brass feel they were tricked into it"—the nuclear planning—"by being asked to provide all options in the planning papers."

Sam Gardiner, a military analyst who taught at the National War College before retiring from the Air Force as a colonel, said that Rumsfeld's second-guessing and micromanagement were a fundamental problem. "Plans are more and more being directed and run by civilians from the Office of the Secretary of Defense," Gardiner said. "It causes a lot of tensions. I'm hearing that the military is increasingly upset about not being taken seriously by Rumsfeld and his staff."

Gardiner went on, "The consequence is that, for Iran and other missions, Rumsfeld will be pushed more and more in the direction of special operations, where he has direct authority and does not have to put up with the objections of the Chiefs." Since taking office in 2001, Rumsfeld has been engaged in a running dispute with many senior commanders over his plans to transform the military, and his belief that future wars will be fought, and won, with airpower and Special Forces. That combination worked, at first, in Afghanistan, but the growing stalemate there, and in Iraq, has created a rift, especially inside the Army. The senior military official said, "The policymakers are in love with Special Ops—the guys on camels."

The discord over Iran can, in part, be ascribed to Rumsfeld's testy relationship with the generals. They see him as high-handed and unwilling to accept responsibility for what has gone wrong in Iraq. A former Bush Administration official described a recent meeting between Rumsfeld and four-star generals and admirals at a military commanders' conference, on a base outside Washington, that, he was told, went badly. The commanders later told General Pace that "they didn't come here to be lectured by the Defense Secre-

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tary. They wanted to tell Rumsfeld what their concerns were." A few of the officers attended a subsequent meeting between Pace and Rumsfeld, and were unhappy, the former official said, when "Pace did not repeat any of their complaints. There was disappointment about Pace." The retired four-star general also described the commanders' conference as "very fractious." He added, "We've got twenty-five hundred dead, people running all over the world doing stupid things, and officers outside the Beltway asking, 'What the hell is going on?' "

Pace's supporters say that he is in a difficult position, given Rumsfeld's penchant for viewing generals who disagree with him as disloyal. "It's a very narrow line between being responsive and effective and being outspoken and ineffective," the former senior intelligence official said.

But Rumsfeld is not alone in the Administration where Iran is concerned; he is closely allied with Dick Cheney, and, the Pentagon consultant said, "the President generally defers to the Vice-President on all these issues," such as dealing with the specifics of a bombing campaign if diplomacy fails. "He feels that Cheney has an informational advantage. Cheney is not a renegade. He represents the conventional wisdom in all of this. He appeals to the strategic-bombing lobby in the Air Force—who think that carpet bombing is the solution to all problems."

Bombing may not work against Natanz, let alone against the rest of Iran's nuclear program. The possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons gained support in the Administration because of the belief that it was the only way to insure the destruction of Natanz's buried laboratories. When that option proved to be politically untenable (a nuclear warhead would, among other things, vent fatal radiation for miles), the Air Force came up with a new bombing plan, using advanced guidance systems to deliver a series of large bunker-busters—conventional bombs filled with high explosives—on the same target, in swift succession. The Air Force argued that the impact would generate sufficient concussive force to accomplish what a tactical nuclear warhead would achieve, but without provoking an outcry over what would be the first use of a nuclear weapon in a conflict since Nagasaki.

The new bombing concept has provoked controversy among Pentagon planners and outside experts. Robert Pape, a professor at the University of Chicago who has taught at the Air Force's School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, told me, "We always have a few new toys, new gimmicks, and rarely do these new tricks lead to a phenomenal breakthrough. The dilemma is that Natanz is a very large underground area, and even if the roof came down we won't be able to get a good estimate of the bomb damage without people on the ground. We don't even know where it goes underground, and we won't have much confidence in assessing what we've actually done. Absent capturing an Iranian nuclear scientist and documents, it's impossible to set back the program for sure."

One complicating aspect of the multiple-hit tactic, the Pentagon consultant told me, is "the liquefaction problem"—the fact that the soil would lose its consistency owing to the enormous heat generated by the impact of the first bomb. "It will be like bombing water, with its currents and eddies. The bombs would likely be diverted." Intelligence has also shown that for the past two years the Iranians have been shifting their most sensitive nuclear-related materials and production facilities, moving some into urban areas, in anticipation of a bombing raid.

"The Air Force is hawking it to the other services," the former senior intelligence official said. "They're all excited by it, but they're being terribly criticized for it." The main problem, he said, is that the other services do not believe the tactic will work. "The Navy says, 'It's not our plan.' The Marines are against it—they know they're going to be the guys on the ground if things go south."

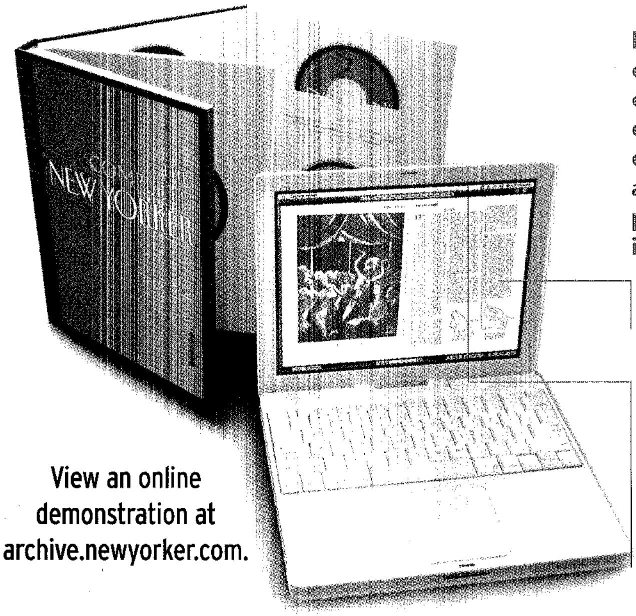
"It's the bomber mentality," the Pentagon consultant said. "The Air Force is saying, 'We've got it covered, we can hit all the distributed targets.' " The Air Force arsenal includes a cluster bomb that can deploy scores of small bomblets with individual guidance systems to home in on specific targets. The weapons were deployed in Kosovo and during the early stages of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and the Air Force is claiming that the same techniques can be used with larger bombs, allowing them to be targeted from twenty-five thousand feet against a multitude of widely dispersed targets. "The Chiefs all know that 'shock and awe' is dead on arrival," the Pentagon consultant said. "All except the Air Force."

"Rumsfeld and Cheney are the pushers on this—they don't want to repeat the mistake of doing too little," the government consultant with ties to Pentagon civilians told me. "The lesson they took from Iraq is that there should have been more troops on the ground"—an impossibility in Iran, because of the overextension of American forces in Iraq—"so the air war in Iran will be one of overwhelming force."

Many of the Bush Administration's supporters view the abrupt change in negotiating policy as a deft move that won public plaudits and obscured the fact that Washington had no other good options. "The United States has done what its international partners have asked it to do," said Patrick Clawson, who is an expert on Iran and the deputy director for research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a conservative think tank. "The ball is now in their court—for both the Iranians and the Europeans." Bush's goal, Clawson said, was to assuage his allies, as well as Russia and China, whose votes, or abstentions, in the United Nations would be needed if the talks broke down and the U.S. decided to seek Security Council sanctions or a U.N. resolution that allowed for the use of force against Iran.

"If Iran refuses to re-start negotiations, it will also be difficult for Russia and China to reject a U.N. call for International Atomic Energy Agency inspections," Clawson said. "And the longer we go without accelerated I.A.E.A. access, the more important the issue of Iran's hidden facilities will become." The drawback to the new American position, Clawson added, was that "the Iranians might take Bush's agreeing to join the talks as a sign that their hard line has worked."

Clawson acknowledged that intelligence on Iran's nuclear-weapons progress was limited. "There was a time when we had reasonable confidence in what we knew," he said. "We could say, 'There's less time than we think,' or, 'It's going more slowly.' Take your choice. Lack of information is a problem, but



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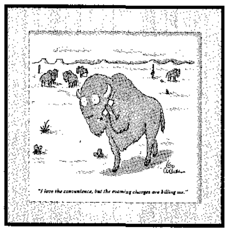

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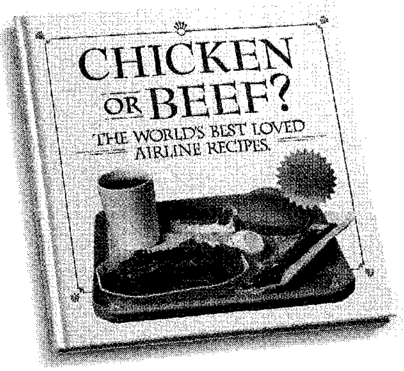

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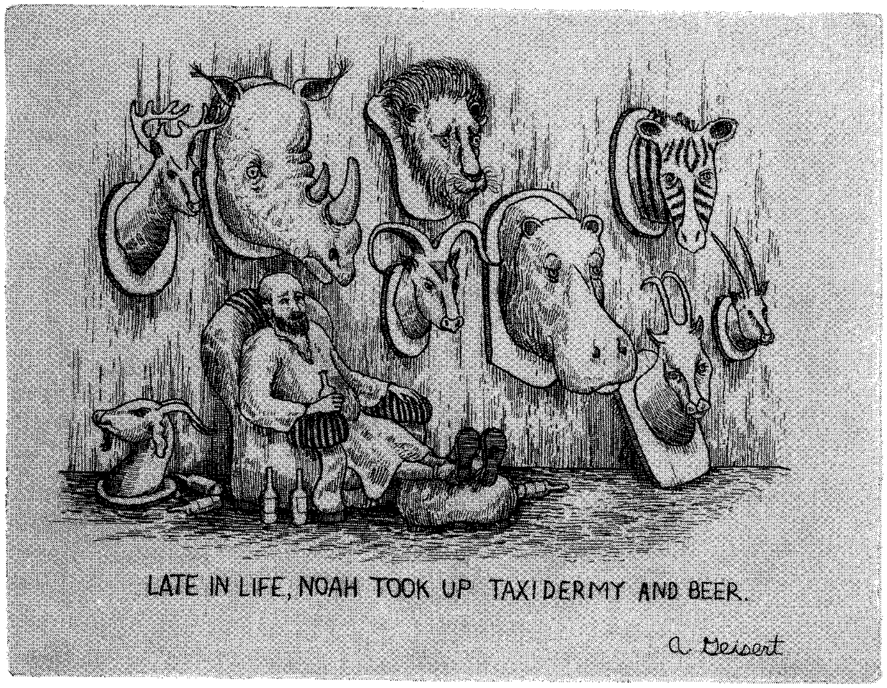

LATE IN LIFE, NOAH TOOK UP TAXIDERMY AND BEER.

• •

we know they've made rapid progress with their centrifuges." (The most recent American intelligence estimate is that Iran could build a warhead sometime between 2010 and 2015.)

Flynt Leverett, a former National Security Council aide for the Bush Administration, told me, "The only reason Bush and Cheney relented about talking to Iran was because they were within weeks of a diplomatic meltdown in the United Nations. Russia and China were going to stiff us"—that is, prevent the passage of a U.N. resolution. Leverett, a project director at the New America Foundation, added that the White House's proposal, despite offering trade and economic incentives for Iran, has not "resolved any of the fundamental contradictions of U.S. policy." The precondition for the talks, he said—an open-ended halt to all Iranian enrichment activity—"amounts to the President wanting a guarantee that they'll surrender before he talks to them. Iran cannot accept long-term constraints on its fuel-cycle activity as part of a settlement without a security guarantee"—for example, some form of mutual non-aggression pact with the United States.

Leverett told me that, without a change in U.S. policy, the balance of power in the negotiations will shift to Russia. "Russia sees Iran as a beachhead against American interests in the Middle East, and they're playing a very sophisticated game," he said. "Russia is quite comfortable with Iran having nuclear fuel cycles that would be monitored, and they'll support the Iranian position"—in part because it gives them the opportunity to sell billions of dollars' worth of nuclear fuel and materials to Tehran. "They believe they can manage their long- and short-term interests with Iran, and still manage the security interests," Leverett said. China, which, like Russia, has veto power on the Security Council, was motivated in part by its growing need for oil, he said. "They don't want punitive measures, such as sanctions, on energy producers, and they don't want to see the U.S. take a unilateral stance on a state that matters to them." But, he said, "they're happy to let Russia take the lead in this." (China, a major purchaser of Iranian oil, is negotiating a multibillion-dollar deal with Iran for the purchase of liquefied natural gas over a period of twenty-five years.) As for the Bush Administration, he added, "unless there's a shift, it's only a question of when its policy falls apart."

It's not clear whether the Administration will be able to keep the Europeans in accord with American policy if the talks break down. Morton Abramowitz, a former head of State Department intelligence, who was one of the founders of the International Crisis Group, said, "The world is different than it was three years ago, and while the Europeans want good relations with us, they will not go to war with Iran unless they know that an exhaustive negotiating effort was made by Bush. There's just too much involved, like the price of oil. There will be great pressure put on the Europeans, but I don't think they'll roll over and support a war."

The Europeans, like the generals at the Pentagon, are concerned about the quality of intelligence. A senior European intelligence official said that while "there was every reason to assume" that the Iranians were working on a bomb, there wasn't enough evidence to exclude the possibility that they were bluffing, and hadn't moved beyond a civilian research program. The intelligence official was not optimistic about the current negotiations. "It's a mess, and I don't see any possibility, at the moment, of solving the problem," he said. "The only thing to do is contain it. The question is, What is the redline? Is it when you master the nuclear fuel cycle? Or is it just about building a bomb?" Every country had a different criterion, he said. One worry he had was that, in addition to its security concerns, the Bush Administration was driven by its interest in "democratizing" the region. "The United States is on a mission," he said.

A European diplomat told me that his government would be willing to discuss Iran's security concerns—a dialogue he said Iran offered Washington three years ago. The diplomat added that "no one wants to be faced with the alternative if the negotiations don't succeed: either accept the bomb or bomb them. That's why our goal is to keep the pressure on, and see what Iran's answer will be."

A second European diplomat, speaking of the Iranians, said, "Their tactic is going to be to stall and appear reasonable—to say, 'Yes, but . . .' We know what's going on, and the timeline we're under. The Iranians have repeatedly been in violation of I.A.E.A. safeguards and have given us years of coverup and deception. The international community does not want them to have a bomb, and if we let them continue to enrich that's throwing in the towel—giving up before we talk." The diplomat went on, "It would be a mistake to predict an inevitable failure of our strategy. Iran is a regime that is primarily concerned with its own survival, and if its existence is threatened

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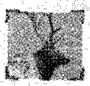
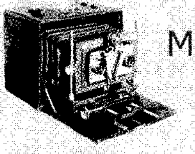
"So whatcha wanna do is first head over to Pine Creek Gorge. We like to call it PA's Grand Canyon. It's breathtaking. Just before you get there, off 660 on the left, is Animal Land. Pay the extra buck for some corn to feed the critters. Then head over to Kinzua Dam, steal a smooch from your sweetie for good luck. Take a small detour through Benezette where you're bound to see an  elk or two. Oh, and check out the Stereoscopic  Museum in Meadville. 19th century high-definition photography. Way ahead of its time sort of stuff. Seriously. Then in Erie, take a walk on the sandy beaches at Presque Isle, hold hands on the water's edge, just like they do in the movies. But first have some of our mulberry pancakes. They're delicious and trust me, you'll need the energy."

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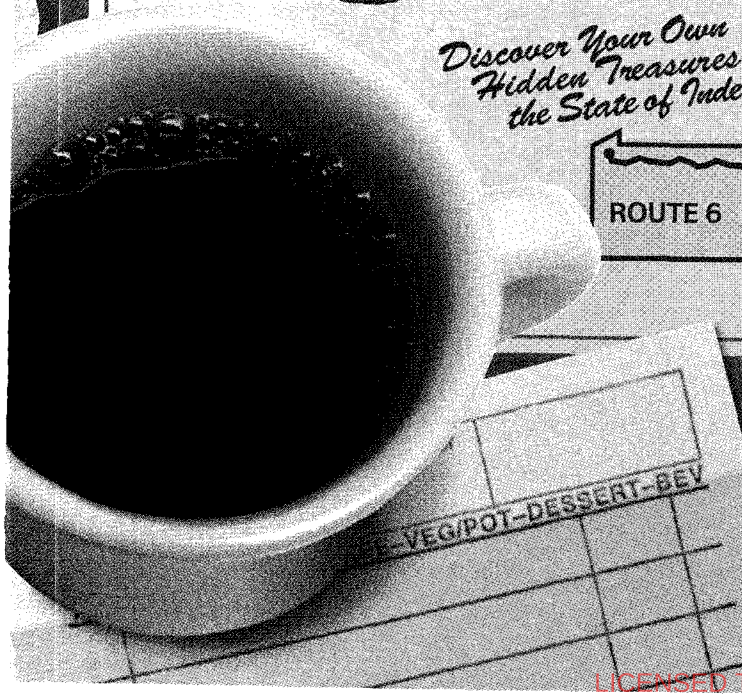
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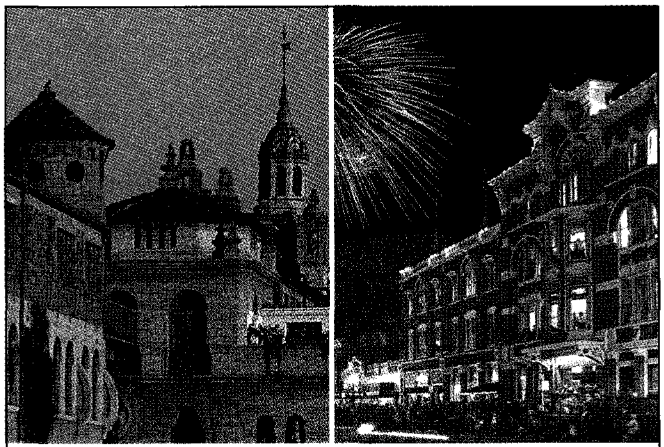

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GREAT GETAWAYS
in the October 16th issue.

it would do whatever it needed to do—including backing down."

The Iranian regime's calculations about its survival also depend on internal political factors. The nuclear program is popular with the Iranian people, including those—the young and the secular—who are most hostile to the religious leadership. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, has effectively used the program to rally the nation behind him, and against Washington. Ahmadinejad and the ruling clerics have said that they believe Bush's goal is not to prevent them from building a bomb but to drive them out of office.

Several current and former officials I spoke to expressed doubt that President Bush would settle for a negotiated resolution of the nuclear crisis. A former high-level Pentagon civilian official, who still deals with sensitive issues for the government, said that Bush remains confident in his military decisions. The President and others in the Administration often invoke Winston Churchill, both privately and in public, as an example of a politician who, in his own time, was punished in the polls but was rewarded by history for rejecting appeasement. In one speech, Bush said, Churchill "seemed like a Texan to me. He wasn't afraid of public-opinion polls. . . . He charged ahead, and the world is better for it."

The Israelis have insisted for years that Iran has a clandestine program to build a bomb, and will do so as soon as it can. Israeli officials have emphasized that their "redline" is the moment Iran masters the nuclear fuel cycle, acquiring the technical ability to produce weapons-grade uranium. "Iran managed to surprise everyone in terms of the enrichment capability," one diplomat familiar with the Israeli position told me, referring to Iran's announcement, this spring, that it had successfully enriched uranium to the 3.6-per-cent level needed to fuel a nuclear-power reactor. The Israelis believe that Iran must be stopped as soon as possible, because, once it is able to enrich uranium for fuel, the next step—enriching it to the ninety-per-cent level needed for a nuclear bomb—is merely a mechanical process.

Israeli intelligence, however, has also failed to provide specific evidence about secret sites in Iran, according to current and former military and intelligence officials. In May, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert visited Washington and, addressing a joint session of Congress, said that Iran "stands on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons" that would pose "an existential threat" to Israel. Olmert noted that Ahmadinejad had questioned the reality of the Holocaust, and he added, "It is not Israel's threat alone. It is a threat to all those committed to stability in the Middle East and to the well-being of the world at large." But at a secret intelligence exchange that took place at the Pentagon during the visit, the Pentagon consultant said, "what the Israelis provided fell way short" of what would be needed to publicly justify preventive action.

The issue of what to do, and when, seems far from resolved inside the Israeli government. Martin Indyk, a former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, who is now the director of the Brookings Institution's Saban Center for Middle East Policy, told me, "Israel would like to see diplomacy succeed, but they're worried that in the meantime Iran will cross a threshold of nuclear know-how—and they're worried about an American military attack not working. They assume they'll be struck first in retaliation by Iran." Indyk added, "At the end of the day, the United States can live with Iranian, Pakistani, and Indian nuclear bombs—but for Israel there's no Mutual Assured Destruction. If they have to live with an Iranian bomb, there will be a great deal of anxiety in Israel, and a lot of tension between Israel and Iran, and between Israel and the U.S."

Iran has not, so far, officially answered President Bush's proposal. But its initial response has been dismissive. In a June 22nd interview with the *Guardian*, Ali Larijani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, rejected Washington's demand that Iran suspend all uranium enrichment before talks could begin. "If they want to put this prerequisite, why are we negotiating at all?" Larijani said. "We should put aside the sanctions and give up all this talk about regime change." He characterized the American offer as a "sermon," and insisted that Iran was not building a bomb. "We don't want the bomb," he said. Ahmadinejad has said that Iran would make a formal counter-proposal by August 22nd, but last week Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme religious leader, declared, on state radio, "Negotiation with the United States has no benefits for us."

Despite the tough rhetoric, Iran would be reluctant to reject a dialogue with the United States, according to Giandomenico Picco, who, as a representative of the United Nations, helped to negotiate the ceasefire that ended the Iran-Iraq War, in 1988. "If you engage a superpower, you feel you are a superpower," Picco told me. "And now the haggling in the Persian bazaar begins. We are negotiating over a carpet"—the suspected weapons program—"that we're not sure exists, and that we don't want to exist. And if at the end there never was a carpet it'll be the negotiation of the century."

If the talks do break down, and the Administration decides on military action, the generals will, of course, follow their orders; the American military remains loyal to the concept of civilian control. But some officers have been pushing for what they call the "middle way," which the Pentagon consultant described as "a mix of options that require a number of Special Forces teams and air cover to protect them to send into Iran to grab the evidence so the world will know what Iran is doing." He added that, unlike Rumsfeld, he and others who support this approach were under no illusion that it could bring about regime change. The goal, he said, was to resolve the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the I.A.E.A., said in a speech this spring that his agency believed there was still time for diplomacy to achieve that goal. "We should have learned some lessons from Iraq," ElBaradei, who won the Nobel Peace Prize last year, said. "We should have learned that we should be very careful about assessing our intelligence. . . . We should have learned that we should try to exhaust every possible diplomatic means to solve the problem before thinking of any other enforcement measures."

He went on, "When you push a country into a corner, you are always giving the driver's seat to the hard-liners. . . . If Iran were to move out of the nonproliferation regime altogether, if Iran were to develop a nuclear weapon program, we clearly will have a much, much more serious problem." ♦

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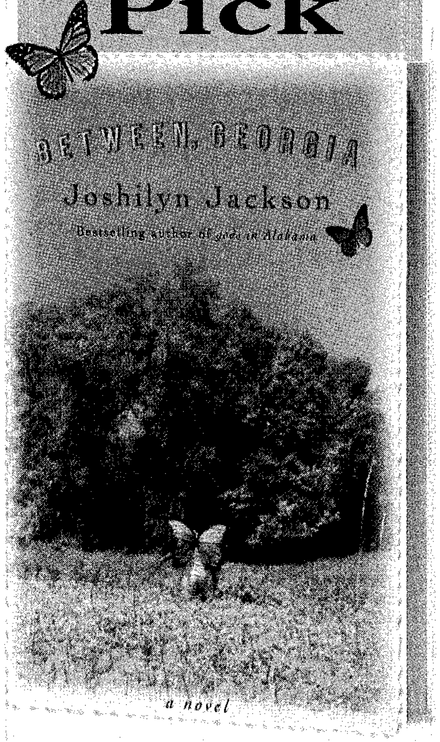

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OUR LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

WHERE HIP-HOP LIVES

Hot 97's turf wars.

BY BEN McGRATH

On the last Wednesday in April, a former drug dealer named Jamal Woolard, from the Lafayette Garden housing projects, in Bedford-Stuyvesant, was preparing for his big break. Woolard, whose hip-hop name is Gravy and whose songs include "Drugs, Drugs, Drugs," "Get Wet, Get Wet," "I Know, I Know," and "Murder, Murder," has for several years been a figure on the Brooklyn underground circuit, cutting mix tapes with better-known performers like Busta Rhymes, Foxy Brown, and 50 Cent. A year and a half ago, he signed a major-label recording deal, with Warner Bros., but outside the bootleg market on Canal Street, where you can collect the latest rap demos and mix tapes (CDs, actually) for five dollars apiece, Gravy remained an unknown. That Wednesday night, he was due to make an appearance on "Riding with Funkmaster Flex," a popular radio show on WQHT, otherwise known as Hot 97. He'd been invited by Flex, a veteran d.j. who wields a king-making power in the hip-hop industry, to perform in an improvisatory freestyle session with a couple of other rappers, Joell Ortiz and Saigon.

For moral support, Gravy had assembled a sizable entourage—three or four dozen men—and outfitted them with extra-large blue T-shirts that read "Gravy" on the front and, on the back, "Brooklyn 'Get Up,'" a reference to the first single from his forthcoming album. Punctuality is unusual in the rap world, but Gravy and his crew arrived early for his session, and when he presented himself at the Hot 97 studio, on Hudson Street in the West Village, at a quarter to seven, Flex sent him away and told him not to return until ten. Gravy went around the corner to get something to eat.

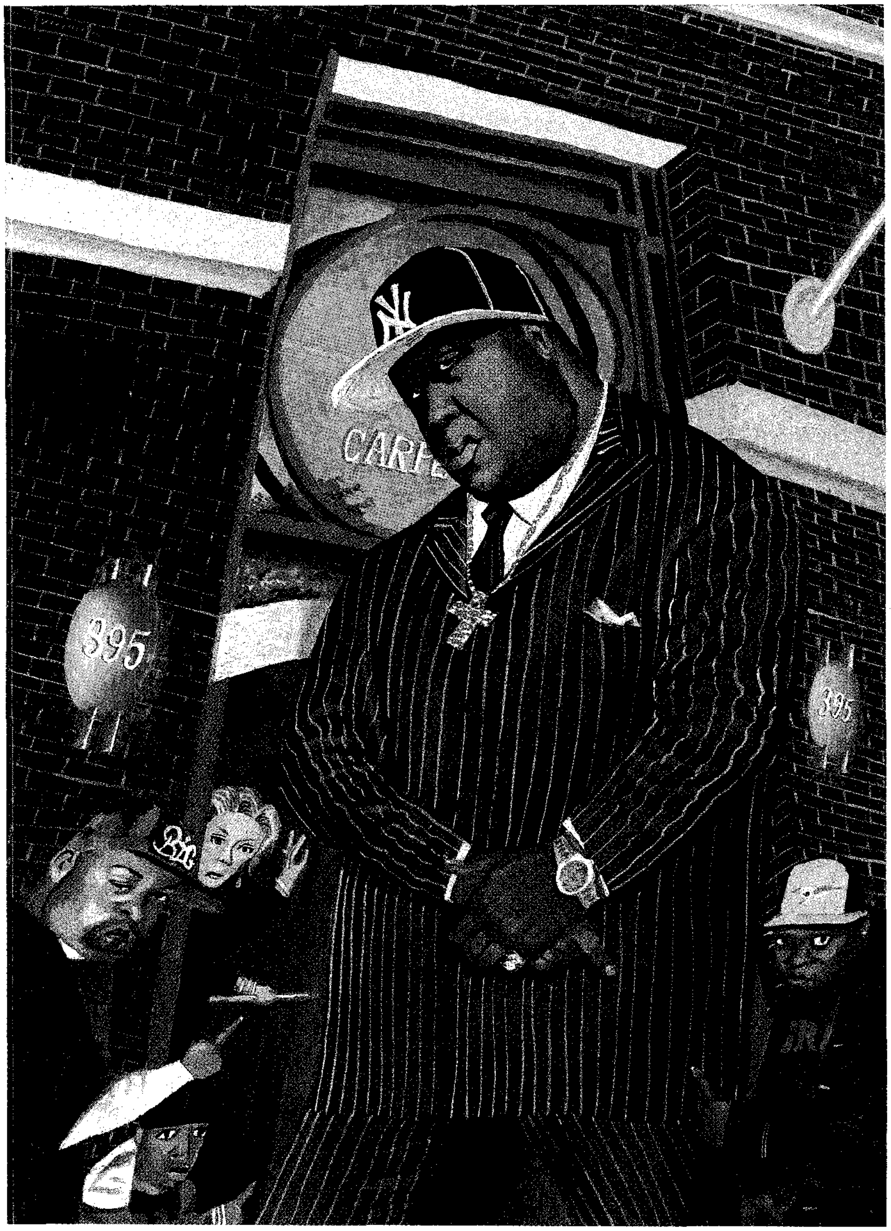
A couple of hours passed. "Then, after I got a sandwich and came out of the store—da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-*da!*" Gravy told me later, mimicking the sound of gunfire. "The only thing I remember is falling, and knowing that I'm shot—just don't know where. It's not like, when you get shot, 'Oh, I got shot *here*.' Nah. You know you hit, so your mind frame is—you pumped, your adrenaline is going. I reach my hand over, and I see I'm bleeding. I didn't see the hole. I can't see behind my ass."

Gravy is an enormous man—well over six feet, and more than three hundred pounds—with a caboose to match. The bullet, it turned out, had struck him in his left buttock. "Straight clean shot—through the ass, through the thigh," he said, gently rubbing the front of his pants leg.

Five stories up that night, in the building that houses Hot 97, Amy Hackett, the director of institutional relations at Legal Momentum, a women's-rights nonprofit, was at her desk, working late. She heard the shots, followed by shouting, and decided to wait another hour or so before attempting to leave. Hackett's taste in radio tends toward NPR. When she finally ventured downstairs, she saw police lights and yellow tape everywhere, and asked one of the detectives, "Is this another gangster-rap event?"

The police were bewildered. They found nearly a dozen shell casings but no victims. Gravy had scrambled inside and up to the seventh floor, to Hot 97, where he proceeded with the interview and the freestyle, as planned. Joell Ortiz didn't notice that anything was amiss. "Gravy seemed relaxed up there, and he killed it when called on to rhyme," Ortiz said.

"Nobody knew what the situation was, because I didn't want it to be *known*," Gravy explained to me. "I was there to do my job, so I did my job. Now, to people it looks like 'Well, you got *shot*. And you *still* went in there and did your job?' Like, O.K., let's put the shoe on the other foot. What was I supposed to tell a powerful influence like Flex, at Hot 97? 'You know what, Flex? I'm sorry, man. I



After the shooting, Gravy slipped inside and freestyled on Funkmaster Flex's show.

MARK ULRIKSEN

can't do the show. I was standing downstairs—got shot in the ass.' What, are you nuts? Right? It wouldn't make any sense. So I had to do what I had to do."

He continued, "I just went on with the rhymes, but it was hard, because the bullet, it's hot—like, I don't know how to describe it. You got to just get shot to understand. It's real warm. It makes you feel like you can't move, like something is holding you."

Around midnight, when Flex went off the air, Gravy made his way back down to the lobby, and found that the police hadn't left. "And I *still* respected Hot 97," he said. "I'm telling everyone, 'I'm fine, I'm fine. Look, I'm great.' Got a big old shirt on, hiding the blood, and everything. 'I just want to leave.' They're saying, 'You can't leave, you can't leave. Got to answer some questions.' Then it got so bad, with my pants bleeding, that that's how they found out—'cause they kept me for so long. I was already up in Hot 97 for at least two hours, with the bullet in me, you understand? Bleeding *crazy*."

An ambulance took Gravy to St. Vincent's, while a distraught girlfriend followed close behind, in a Bentley. "By the time I got to the hospital, when the cops took all my clothes off, they found the bullet—inside my *sneaker*," he said. "Yeah, so it came through the hole and, you know, got baggy pants on, so it fell and trickled down to my shoe. They were, like, 'What the *hell*? This is a .45. Oh, *man*.' Then they told me about the eleven rounds." He arched his eyebrows. "Somebody was trying to really do some *damage*."

Not everyone agrees with Gravy on that point. "I wonder—no one has ever really seen the wound," Flex told me. "Probably the person who treated it is the only one who saw it. It couldn't have been excruciating pain. He was moving his hips up there. I mean, *I'd* like to see it. I'm sure we all would."

Barry Mayo, who was the station's general manager at the time, was more direct. "There are some people who felt that that surreal chain of events was life imitating art," he said, and brought up a "Sopranos" episode that had aired a few weeks before the shooting, in which Tony's brother-in-law, Bobby, persuades an up-and-coming rapper named Marvin to take a bullet for the sake of raising his profile. Marvin ends up paying Bobby seven thousand dollars for the favor, and, when the time comes, Bobby's bullet hits Marvin in the left buttock.

Gravy maintains that he's never watched "The Sopranos." "I'm not really trying to promote this," he said, again stroking his thigh. "That's not what it's about. What happened happened, and I'm still alive, God willing. You know, just like the name of my album, 'God Willing.' "

Two weeks had passed since the big night, and Gravy and I were sitting in a spacious thirty-second-floor office in Rockefeller Center belonging to Kevin Liles, the executive vice-president of the Warner Music Group. (Liles co-wrote the Milli Vanilli song "Girl You Know It's True.") Gravy had on jeans, a zip-up sweatshirt, orange-and-green Nike dunks, and a Mets camouflage hat. Despite his size, and his lyrics ("They ain't bulletproof/Fuck them boys/We put holes in they badges"), Gravy has a gentle, almost vulnerable, affect, with an impish smile and glassy, deep-set eyes that undermine any attempts at a scowl. News accounts of the shooting gave his age as thirty, but he told me that he was twenty-seven. He said he'd been mostly lying low, doing physical therapy and working on his MySpace page. ("It's addictive—lot of hot women on there, boy," he said. "You could be on there for hours.")

He might have been enjoying more

public sympathy were it not for the fact that fourteen months earlier another man had been shot in front of the radio station's building. In that instance, 50 Cent had used an interview with Funkmaster Flex to declare that he was cutting a rapper named Jayceon (the Game) Taylor from his G-Unit crew, on the ground of disloyalty. The Game happened to have just left the premises—he'd given an interview to Hot 97's Angie Martinez, who works the afternoon rush-hour shift—and soon afterward troops representing the newly minted rivals clashed in the lobby. (50 Cent, who had arrived at the station with twenty-eight friends in tow, was at a considerable advantage; the Game had a five-man contingent.) Several shots were fired, including one that hit the leg of a Game loyalist. An article in *Crain's New York Business* suggested that the conflict had been a "stage-managed event that got out of control."

Outside the same building, in February of 2001, a feud between Foxy Brown and the rapper Lil' Kim had culminated in more than twenty shots, from half a dozen weapons (including a MAC-11 submachine gun), when Kim and a recording partner of Brown's named Kiam (Capone) Holley passed in the Hot 97 hallway, had words, and apparently did little to dissuade their many tagalongs from escalating the situation out on the sidewalk. This was no publicity stunt: a friend of Capone's took a slug in his back, and a couple of strays found glass—a second-story window, the window of a parked car. The incident resulted in a perjury conviction for Kim, who martyred herself to the hip-hop code that forbids snitching. Her jail term—which may have been served in vain, given that her friends Suif (C. Gutta) Jackson and Damion (D. Roc) Butler were convicted anyway—ends this week.

Gravy, like Lil' Kim, chose not to coöperate with the police investigation—which has thus far been inconclusive. According to news reports, surveillance footage indicated that the shots may have come from a man in Gravy's entourage; whether that man was trying to do Gravy a favor or harm (out of frustration at the fact that he wasn't allowed to accompany Gravy upstairs, as some have suggested) remains an open question. A couple of days before I went to Rockefeller Center, Funkmaster Flex made an announcement. "Gravy's records will no longer—will never play on Hot 97 again," he said. "Whoever gets into an altercation in front of the radio station, whether it's your fault or not, you will not be played."

Gravy was sitting in a car, listening to Hot 97, when the devastating news was delivered. "If I died, or if I had to go through a shit bag—you know, where you get shot in the stomach and you can't shit regular, got to wear the bag—they'd be playing me like crazy," he said, still incredulous. "You have to damn near *die* to be famous these days?"

No. 395 Hudson Street, which spans the block between West Houston, to the south, and Clarkson, to the north, is familiarly known as "the Hot 97 building," even though the station occupies just one of ten floors, and shares that floor with two other stations, KISS-FM and CD101.9. (All three are owned by Emmis Communications, an Indianapolis-based corporation that operates nearly thirty radio and television stations across the country.) The nickname has long rankled the landlord, the New York City District Council of Carpenters, an umbrella organization representing ten local carpentry unions. The building was an A.T. & T. warehouse before the district council bought it, in 1988, and gutted it, ultimately spending tens of millions of dollars on renovations to create, at a time when many members were out of work, a showplace for the carpentry trade. "There's a lot of pride in that building," Brian O'Dwyer, a lawyer who represents the council, told me. At the back of the lobby, which is impeccably finished with cherry panelling, are two banks of four elevators: carpenters go right, others go left. A large "Never Forget" plaque, listing the names of eighteen carpenters who died on September 11th, hangs on the wall.

For years, the district council struggled to find tenants to justify the costly overhaul. In 1996, Emmis moved in, and the carpenters offered a sixteen-year lease. By 2000, the commercial climate in the neighborhood had improved considerably and the building had begun to fill up. (Tenants today include Thomson Financial Services, the marketing agency Greater Than One, and the Census Bureau.) The radio stations, which attracted S.U.V.s with bass-heavy soundtracks, and promotional giveaways that littered the sidewalk in front, came to seem an imposition—particularly Hot 97, whose original slogan, "Where Hip-Hop Lives," was being taken perhaps too literally. During the blackout in the summer of 2003, according to a building employee, a group of rappers and basketball players, including LeBron James, sought refuge in the lobby of 395 Hudson.

After the Gravy shooting, the New York City Police Department decided to install a twenty-four-hour video camera—the first of its kind in Manhattan, with a zoom lens and real-time feeds to the local precinct—across the street from the building. And on May 1st the carpenters, citing the Gravy incident as "the proverbial 'last straw,'" sued Emmis for eviction. The complaint, which is twenty-eight pages long and buttressed by extensive quotes from the tabloids (the *Daily News:* "Hot 97 . . . is the O.K. Corral of New York"; the *Post:* "the 'interview/shootout' is rather a Hot 97 tradition"), reads less like a landlord-tenant dispute than like a sweeping cultural indictment, with references to "so-called 'posses' or 'entourages,'" the whiff of marijuana smoke, and "shocking and unsavory incidents," set against the presence, nearby, of a "public school for developmentally disabled youth."

All told, the carpenters allege more than fifty incidents of "violence" associated with the radio stations on the seventh floor; the vast majority of them appear to consist of verbal confrontations between building security and guests of Hot 97. (In January, the suit claims, DMX referred to one security guard as an "eight-fifty-an-hour faggot," and warned, "If you step outside, I'll kick your fucking ass, you bitch.")

For Stuart GraBois, the executive director of the carpenters' benefits funds and a former federal prosecutor, the issue comes down to respect, as much as anything else. "It's just *wrong*," he said. "We had to create a separate elevator to get them to their floor, and make the other tenants agreeable."

Since the 50 Cent shooting, in February of 2005, one of the four elevators on the left bank has been designated for Emmis use only; during much of that period, artists (or, as GraBois says, "so-called rap artists") arriving for on-air interviews have used the freight entrance. Posses, in a series of negotiated arrangements—"artist plus two," then "artist plus one"—have been neutralized, or at least relegated to the sidewalk. The separate elevator—the No. 7 Express—exists primarily for the benefit of producers and secretaries and advertising salespeople.

One way to view the situation at 395 Hudson is as a kind of tribal struggle: Irish union men of the Old Guard bristling at the presumptuous ascendance of black hip-hop culture, and a changing set of social norms. The result is that black dignitaries affiliated with the radio station, like Busta Rhymes, enter the building through the mailroom, on Clarkson Street, while white political dignitaries courting the union, like Senators Hillary Clinton and Charles Schumer, arrive grandly through the glass doors on Hudson.

"We get a lot of V.I.P.s upstairs," Fred Schneider, a retired cop who now serves on the carpenters' security team, said, with evident pride, after showing me a large tenth-floor conference room with plush green carpeting and a doughnut-shaped birch table. "I mean, everybody comes here, in and out, all the time. One time I was working here, we had a big one, for all the Democratic candidates for mayor, and Puff Diddy, he comes running through the lobby. Right behind him comes his bouncer, with two dogs. It just goes to show: we have something going on like that—these are all big political people, line out the door—like, that's a situation where something could have happened. He was coming to the radio station with his big Shar-Peis."

As it happens, the district council has been operating under a federal consent decree since 1994, thanks to longstanding Mob ties. "They're trying to throw people out for doing the same shit they do," a high-ranking city official said recently, and cited a couple of incidents—both occurring within a week of Gravy's shooting—by way of illustration. In one, the president of Local 20, Christopher Wallace, disrupted a public hearing on the prospect of building a Nascar track on Staten Island (the carpenters are for it) by putting the councilman Andrew Lanza (who is against it) in what the *Daily News* referred to as a headlock. In the other, five carpenters from Local 608 were arrested after starting a brawl at a non-union construction site in Chelsea, in which two police officers were injured. According to the *Post*, "the fracas looked like a scene out of 'Gangs of New York,'" and afterward the Local 608 president, John Greaney, said, "It got out of control, and the police went to town on us," sound-

nomore
6am9pm

ing not unlike a truculent rapper. (To make matters weirder still, twenty years ago a Local 608 vice-president, John O'Connor, was shot in the buttocks, on orders from John Gotti; he, too, declined to coöperate with the police investigation.) The difference, the official seemed to imply, was that the carpenters had been smart enough to conduct their unofficial business in front of other people's buildings, not their own.

Caught in the middle of this macho standoff is Legal Momentum, the women's organization tucked away on the fifth floor. Last year, posters went up on its bathroom mirrors decrying offensive lyrics at Hot 97, but to a large extent oblivion reigns. "I'm not sure I would recognize what a posse was," Amy Hackett told me. "The only person I've recognized was Spike Lee. And he, I think, is fairly safe."

One employee in the building—a black woman—adopted a mock-hysteric voice when I asked her about the feud. "The other tenants are calling me up: 'What are you guys *doing* about this? Did you hear about the shooting? Should we write *letters*?' "

She paused, and said, "Let me just say this, O.K.? We talking about the carpenters' *union*. The carpenters' union, if you look at those men up there, is full of nothing other than *gangsters*. You should see these people. You can tell them, because they all have pinkie rings on their fingers—you know, *come on*. An engineer can't come up here without—gangster style—three men standing behind him. So it's, like, the pot can't call the kettle black. Their mentality is the same as these rappers'. They have to come with their entourage."

I tried out the theory of tribal turf war on Funkmaster Flex, when I visited him in his daytime office, which is in Dobbs Ferry. He smiled, and offered a milder interpretation, of generational conflict. "I think the building and Hot 97 is a case of young and old: older people who might be a little stuffy, who want to have some calm nights, and younger guys—black, blue, brown, white—who come to a radio station and make a lot of noise," he said. "I mean, the carpenters' union definitely has some issues"—he laughed—"but those guys and us, like, they'll ask me for an autograph."

Flex is thirty-eight, and lives with his wife and daughter in a house farther up the Hudson Line in Westchester County. His story is in many ways that of the station: from brash, music-loving Bronx kid to branded cultural figurehead and suburban businessman.

He grew up listening to Chuck Chillout and D.J. Red Alert on WBLS and KISS-FM in the eighties, and later got a job carrying records for Chillout. He joined Hot 97 as a d.j. in 1992, shortly before it committed to becoming the first all-hip-hop radio station in the country. (The station prides itself on hiring respected local hip-hop figures rather than career radio professionals as d.j.s.) The next few years, which he calls "the best time of my life," he spent playing the records of New York-based artists like A Tribe Called Quest, Leaders of the New School, and Gang Starr—all of them now critically lionized.

In 1996, Flex was the first prominent d.j. to play Jay-Z's début, "Reasonable Doubt," thereby helping to spark one of the most successful music careers of the past decade. That same year, the passage of the Telecommunications Act initiated a trend toward increased corporate control of the airwaves, and this, along with the arrival of competition—in 2002, Clear Channel replaced Jammin' 105, an oldies station, with the hip-hop-driven Power 105—has greatly limited his playlist. On Hot 97 today, you're apt to hear the same eight songs you keep hearing on Power 105, and Flex, who was wearing a black T-shirt advertising the Funkmaster Flex Custom Car and Bike Show Tour, told me that radio now accounts for only a small part of his business. "I'm the first African-American to be endorsed by a motor oil," he said.

Hot 97's recent broadcasting legacy is largely confined to shock humor. Smackfest, an extremely popular segment that began airing in the spring of 2004, featured pairs of listeners, mostly women, who'd been invited up to the studio and were asked to slap one another in the face, nine times each, with merit points awarded for style and enthusiasm, and a cash prize given to the consensus "winner." ("We got mouth blood!" one d.j. said, after the sound of palm on cheek, in the middle of a fierce showdown between Kemeisha, from Queens, and Ray Ray, from Brooklyn.) It continued into 2005, when Eliot Spitzer, the New York state attorney general, intervened at the behest of six city council members and found the contests to be in violation of the state's "combative sports" statute. (Only boxing, wrestling, and martial-arts exhibitions or matches are permitted.)

Meanwhile, in the first weeks of 2005, shortly after the Southeast Asian tsunami, Miss Jones, the host of Hot 97's morning show, repeatedly played a ditty set to the tune of "We Are the World":

> You can hear the screaming Chinks.
> And no one was safe from the wave.

ANNIVERSARY

Tonight they were bringing my brother up from the deep,
nothing so grand as the sea, merely
a quarry in Georgia, barely
a mile or two wide and flooded
to a depth of two hundred feet, no bigger
in the scheme of things
than a soup spoon's bowl,
but it held him, it cradled him,
this place vast as death,
small as life. It reduced him
to a speck in the universe.
The size of him, after all,
was vast and small.
It filled the spoon; it disappeared.

—*Mary Stewart Hammond*

There were Africans drowning,
Little Chinamen swept away.
You can hear God laughing, "Swim, you
bitches, swim!"

So now you're screwed, it's the tsunami,
You better run or kiss your ass away, go
find your mommy.
I just saw her float by, a tree went through
her head...

Chuck D. famously called rap "CNN for black people," and, to the extent that the analogy has merit, a more precise application might be Hot 97, which, like the first cable news network, has struggled with an identity crisis in the face of declining ratings. (Power 105 beat it in two of the last three periods.) The carpenters, arguing that Hot 97 has promoted feuds between rival rappers, cite the long-running case of Jay-Z versus Nas, an implicit battle for New York's rhyming crown, in which Hot 97 flip-flopped, first playing, in December of 2001, an exclusive and unpublished "diss track," in which Jay-Z intimated that he'd had an affair with the mother of Nas's daughter, and then polling listeners about which rapper they supported, only to invite Jay-Z back so that he could deliver an on-air apology when it turned out that Nas was in the lead. (Jay-Z credited a rare intercession from his mother with precipitating his change of heart: "My moms never, *ever* calls my cell.")

The following June, at the station's annual Summer Jam concert, Hot 97 executives forbade Nas, the intended headliner, to bring a Jay-Z effigy onstage, where he planned to conduct a mock lynching on a twelve-foot gallows. (Nas had been unmoved by the moms gambit, telling the *Times*, "That was really un-hip-hop, the way he handled it.") Nas left the jam in a huff, and reported directly to the studio of Power 105, in midtown, where he told Big Steph Lova, an ex-Hot 97 d.j., that Funkmaster Flex was guilty of accepting payola. (Flex denies the charge. Allegations of pay-for-play have been widespread in the radio industry for decades, and Emmis is only one of nine major broadcasting companies that have received subpoenas from Spitzer's office, as part of an ongoing investigation.)

Nas and Jay-Z never came to blows, but, late one night that September, Flex, whose given name is Aston Taylor, ran into Lova (Stephanie Saunders) outside 395 Hudson Street while leaving the studio, and, according to Lova, he began to choke her. She says he also called her a "slut," a "whore," a "broke-ass bitch," a "stupid fucking bitch," a "dumb bitch," and an "ungrateful bitch." Then he threw money at her feet and said, "You're going to need this to pay your lawyer's retainer."

Duly retained, Saunders's lawyer filed a civil suit against Taylor for assault and battery, and against Hot 97 and Emmis for negligent hiring. The station fought back with an indignant press release about Saunders that, in retrospect, could be said to prefigure Hot 97's own predicament vis-à-vis the carpenters:

> Many of our staff have witnessed her lingering in front of the Hot 97 offices at all

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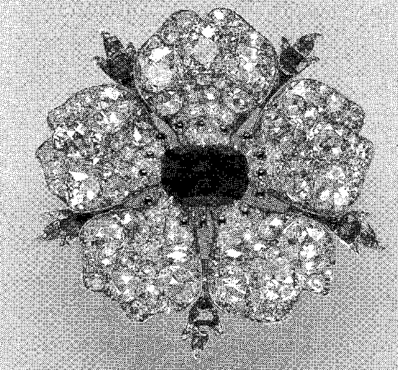

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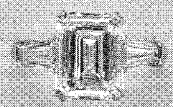

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hours of the day and night. Her repeated, uninvited presence in front of our facilities has made our employees extremely uncomfortable and anxious. We are seeking an order of protection so that Ms. Saunders will keep away from our offices and staff.

Flex appears to have mellowed since then, and with me he talked about how the decline of the small-time drug business was hurting hip-hop by introducing a "persistent, annoying" element into the industry. "People who can't make a fast buck on the corner anymore, now they think maybe the music business is a fast buck," he said. "And why *wouldn't* they think it's a fast buck? It's on Letterman, it's on MTV, it's in *Forbes* magazine—how much Jay-Z, a person who used to sell drugs, makes. Biggie, a person who used to sell drugs. Suge Knight. Eazy-E. Hot 97 never glorified that. Never. That was always glorified by VH1 'Behind the Music.' "

The eviction suit, with its emphasis on the station's physical plant, its occupying a particular space, comes at a time when more and more stations across the country have opted to become disembodied voices. The rise of satellite companies (Sirius and XM) and Web sites such as MySpace, along with the continued effects of F.C.C. deregulation, appear to be threatening the relevance of "local" broadcasting. (Clear Channel, which is based in San Antonio, produces ostensibly personalized voice tracks for its regional affiliates across the country.) What's more, the troubles at Hot 97 have coincided with a decline in the importance of New York in the larger hip-hop landscape. Southern rap now dominates the album-sales charts, as well as radio playlists—to the dismay of New York-based artists, who feel betrayed by their local d.j.s. ("If you gonna play in your back yard, you should be playing your back-yard music," Gravy says. "Sometimes it's not about the money, it's about the principle—you from New York.")

As a way of maintaining street credibility—hip-hop's Holy Grail—in such an environment, Hot 97 has adopted a defiant business strategy that consists, in effect, of converting its production facility into a stage set of the hood, and, as often as possible, calling attention to its home and the guest stars who drop by. "We don't emulate the life style; we *are* the life style, because of the people we continually bring into the building," the station's programming director, John Dimick, once said. "At any given time, artists and listeners are hanging around the station and people are handing out mix disks in front of the station."

In the aftermath of the Gravy shooting, however, the district council enforced a complete ban on visitors to the seventh floor: no interviews, no freestyles, no FedEx messengers. It took less than a week for Emmis to file a countersuit, for breach of contract, arguing that such "astoundingly draconian restrictions" were tantamount to putting Hot 97 out of business.

The two sides met in New York State Supreme Court, on Centre Street, where Brian O'Dwyer tried explaining a little street lingo to the judge, Bernard Fried, who is sixty-five: "If Your Honor may or may not be aware, as part of the culture of the artists, they travel with a great number of people who are called 'posses.' I'm learning about this myself these days."

Eric Heichel, speaking for Emmis, in turn asked, "Is it reasonable to assume the Federal Express man is suddenly becoming a threat to security?"

Judge Fried granted a temporary restraining order against the district council and its restrictive policy. Hot 97 was free for the interim to resume inviting guests, on the condition that they come alone—artist plus zero. The two sides have since been working on a settlement that would preclude Fried's addressing the bigger question of the "ejection action." ("It's really dangerous to think out loud, but I'm going to do it," Fried advised. "Why can't you, as a means of providing a solution here, require that the artist meet one of your representatives at a location someplace else in New York City, and that artist, together with the single representative or two other people, travels by New York City taxicab to the location, so that you don't have a situation where the posses are accumulating?")

Hot 97 producers put together a prideful jingle, set to the tune of P. Diddy's "Bad Boy for Life." It went, "We ain't goin' nowhere. We can't be stopped now. 'Cause it's Hudson for Life."

With the resumption of live interviews, seventh-floor domestic concerns, such as the protection of the carpet, returned to the fore. (Signs taped to the doors warn of a five-hundred-dollar fine for eating in the studio.) The R. & B. artist Brooke Valentine dropped by on a Sunday evening to discuss her dating preferences ("He got to be chocolate but he can't be purple: I want to be able to see him when I pick him up at night"), and a couple of weeks later Jay-Z paid a visit, which Angie Martinez announced with fanfare. "El Presidente!" she said, describing his arrival for her listeners' benefit. "He's currently doing his Presidential wave." To her guest, she said, "Take your jacket off, relax."

"Gonna get comfy and cozy, like this my home," he replied.

They talked briefly about current events. "I was meeting with Bill Gates, telling him about Hot 97 last week," Jay-Z said. "He told me about what the world's going to look like in five years, and I got scared. He's just extra smart. I don't even want to get into it."

Martinez mentioned an article in *The Economist*, "Bubbles and Bling," in which the managing director of Cristal, the champagne producer, had been quoted expressing only lukewarm "curiosity and serenity" about the attention that American rappers bring to the brand.

"Cristal is *done*—finished," Jay-Z said, calling for a boycott. "How's that for a slap in the face?... I know I bought about fifty thousand cases in my lifetime, personally."

Martinez steered the discussion back to the day's big news: in honor of the tenth anniversary of "Reasonable Doubt," which Hot 97 had made famous, Jay-Z would be playing a special concert at Radio City Music Hall—"and we have your tickets. This is the only place on the planet that can hook you up right now."

She wanted to know what brand of champagne they should have ready for him at the show, if not Cristal. "Dom Rosé is great," Jay-Z replied. "Can you get me some Dom Rosé?"

The interview, which generated international news as word of the proposed boycott spread, turned out to be a brilliant exercise in cross-branding and mutual promotion.

That afternoon, Fatman Scoop, another d.j. at the station, told a boastful anecdote that seemed meant especially to needle the carpenters. "There was a time Mary J. Blige was in the area," he said. "She had to go to the bathroom, so she came up to Hot 97. She didn't even do an interview. She just came up to use the bathroom. That's how connected we are. It's Hot 97."

Gravy's closest business associate, a producer named Fendi, has made a series of DVDs, entitled "The Come Up," depicting the hip-hop life style in a raunchy fashion that makes Hot 97 seem almost Disneyfied. The footage is loosely assembled, and culled from home videos and concert films. (One bit, from the 2004 Summer Jam, shows audience members and 50 Cent's G-Unit throwing chairs and bottles at one another.) Guns and drugs figure prominently.

A recent edition features a scene shot last year, before Gravy's feud with Hot 97, and shortly after he and Fendi had negotiated to take their private label, Dirty Money Records, to Warner Bros., for a reported three million dollars. It is night, and Gravy and Ice-T are standing on Eighth Street, in the Village—a young rapper on the cusp of success, basking in the attention of an elder statesman. "We just chilling," Ice-T says. "I bumped into Gravy. Say, 'What's happening?' We talking."

"We gone got the official Gangsta Man," Gravy says. "You can't get more gangsta than this man right here, you know?... Tell me, what you got going on, Ice-T?"

"Right now, I'm on TV—niggas watching me on 'Law and Order: Special Victims Unit,' cause I'm the real mothafuckin' pimp," Ice-T says. "Playing the police. Imagine that. That's real pimpin' for a street nigga like me."

Ice-T mentions that he's got a new album coming out ("Gangsta Rap"), along with a clothing line (310 Motoring) and an energy drink (Liquid Ice) to promote: "I'm just trying to get it all, man. I'm trying to stay in the game."

Gravy, nodding along, is wearing three huge silver necklaces, with crosses dangling in front of his stomach. "My man, shit, let me check out how you roll," he says, turning and pointing behind Ice-T to a silver luxury car.

"Yeah, this the Bentley," Ice-T says, before directing the camera to the front seat, where he shows off a customized steering wheel. "Got a lot of wood up in there. You go check niggas' Bentleys out, you ain't even going to *see* the wood steering wheel, 'cause that's extra. That

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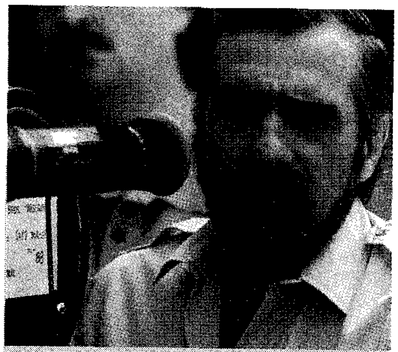

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Ice-T turns serious. "The hardest thing in the world to get is street respect, where niggas really are happy to see you with this type of stuff, you dig? That's the hardest thing to obtain, is to get it, and have the hood feel like you deserve it, you dig? 'Cause you can go out there, get a budget, and get a whole bunch of money—niggas will run right up in your crib and repossess that bullshit, *real* quick. Look, look, look— "

A double-decker sightseeing bus has pulled to a stop behind the Bentley ("Ladies and gentlemen, Ice-T!"), and tourists on the upper level begin snapping pictures. "What's up, Ice-T?"

"What's happening?" he shouts back.

"There he is!"

Turning to face the camera again, Ice-T smirks, and says, "That's all white people—*trip*. That's all white people. So you got to be good in the hood, and gets respect from the top deck, you dig? World renowned, internationally known, and locally respected. That's me and Saucy"—Gravy—"we do it like that."

The cameraman asks, "Ice-T, how's the rap game changed since you've come up?"

"I mean, the rap game's changed a lot, but I'm not mad at it," he says. "It's more raw. . . . Now every rap crew is made of real mothafuckin' dangerous individuals, you dig what I'm saying? You got to understand, I got in the rap game to get out of the streets. . . . Now the *streets* is in the rap game." Ice-T, as if in a time warp, appears to be counselling his protégé Gravy from some vantage point in the future. "Now niggas idolize the shot, not the shooter," he says. "You brag how many times you got *shot*. I'm supposed to be impressed? . . . I'm down with the niggas who staying on the streets, who *ain't* getting shot, 'cause nobody wants to *shoot* 'em. . . . I'm down with the niggas who come from the gutter but are trying to do it right, so they can feed they kids. Them is my crew. . . . Like *this*, ya heard?" He tugs Gravy back into the frame. "If you motivate niggas to do low, you hustling *sideways*."

Ice-T's wife, Coco, who is white, enters the picture, and his mood lightens. "She representing—just got her mothafuckin' nails done," he says. "I love her to death. . . . All the black women that got problems with Ice-T with a white girl? Kiss my fucking ass." Then he puts his arm around Coco and starts singing "We Are the World," swaying from side to side.

Up in Rockefeller Center after the shooting, Gravy said that he believed God had tried to teach him a lesson. It was this: "There's no reason you should be up at Hot 97, thirty or forty deep, with shirts on. You try to show your movement—'Wow, he got a lot of support'—but, sometimes, you know what? The movement can hurt you. So many dudes cause problems. My motto now is: Four or five deep, I'm good. Four or five dudes, plus security."

Near the end of our conversation, a television in Kevin Liles's office, tuned to BET, showed a press conference on the steps of City Hall, where a woman named Gia Casey—the wife of Hot 97's DJ Envy—was standing beside several councilmen, calling for the arrest of a rival d.j., Troi Torain, who goes by the name Star. Star was fired from Hot 97 in 2003, after more than a dozen suspensions. (He referred to the station's general manager, Mayo, as "Benson," and to his bosses at Emmis as "the big Jew engine.") He then promised to visit "doomsday" on his old employer, and was eventually hired by the competition, Power 105. In the preceding week, that doomsday plan had taken the form of berating his ex-colleague Envy, whose given name is Raashaun Casey, and his family, in spectacularly vile fashion, vowing, Mike Tyson style, not only to come after the Caseys' child but to eat her; he made reference to spreading mayonnaise on her rear, as a dressing. He'd also indicated that he wished to "tinkle" and "skeet" on the girl ("your seed"), who is four, and offered five hundred dollars to any listener who could tell him which preschool she attended.

Hot 97 had not sat idly by. Star's defense—other than his sworn allegiance to an Ayn Rand-inspired philosophy he calls "objective hate"—was that Envy's on-air partner, Miss Jones, had spent the same first few days of May calling Star an "alcoholic," a "faggot," a "spermless dwarf," and the son of a white prostitute "who got knocked up by the blackest, blackest, blackest nigger—and then the coochie must not have been that good because he left her." Jones, who is black, invoked her own child—a one-year-old son—for the purpose of comparing penis sizes with Star; they were, she said, "about the same."

As Gravy and I watched, a ticker on the TV screen revealed that Power 105 had fired Star, and that the N.Y.P.D. had asked him to surrender a pistol that he was licensed to carry. (He was charged later that afternoon with child endangerment.)

"Lost his job for that," Gravy said, shaking his head. "That's crazy. I guess freedom of speech is out of here—doesn't count no more." He stared at the screen briefly, and added, "Even though that's the most ignorant and nasty shit to say." Then he offered the provocateur's catch-all defense: "But it's just words, man. Words don't hurt nobody."

If recent ratings are any indication, the war of words between Hot 97 and Power 105 may be hurting business; the audience at each station has declined more than fifteen per cent since last summer, while the less combative WBLS, using a similar "urban contemporary" format, has gained.

Gravy's own words—his rhymes—are less jarring, by comparison, tending to fall safely within the established motifs of gangsta rap: boasting of sexual prowess (one's "bitches"), complaining about "dick-riders" (i.e., copycats), declaring war on the police, and laying claim to neighborhood terrain. (His assertion of originality notwithstanding, Gravy is hoping to be cast as the lead in an upcoming bio-pic about the late Notorious B.I.G., figuring that he has the looks and the background.)

He drew a distinction between "the hood" (where "not a lot of dudes got computers in they cribs") and "the streets," a larger, amorphous space where public opinion crystallizes. Swaggering forthrightness is the conventional path to selling one's story of hood respect to the streets. And yet the process can be a humbling one, as Gravy allowed, in directing me to a couple of Internet message boards where he tracks his reputation. ("Read *them* comments," he said. "They'll let you *know*. Oh, woo-*wee!*") Hip-hop is a young man's game, and a performer's biggest fear is of being declared a has-been before he's even arrived. Although Gravy had rewound the clock by three years in claiming that he was twenty-seven, one disaffected fan on the message boards he sent me to wrote, "Aww man I thought Gravy was like 22."

"You can see how bad I want it," Gravy said, and acknowledged, in a way that he never could on a mix-tape track, "I ain't made it yet."

Then, as he escorted me to the elevator, he said, "*New Yorker*? How many people see that shits?"

He reflected a moment. "*Damn.* Who needs Hot 97? I got *New Yorker* and MySpace."

He appeared to be walking with a slight limp, but I couldn't say for sure. ♦

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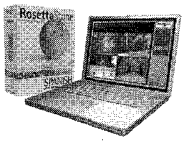

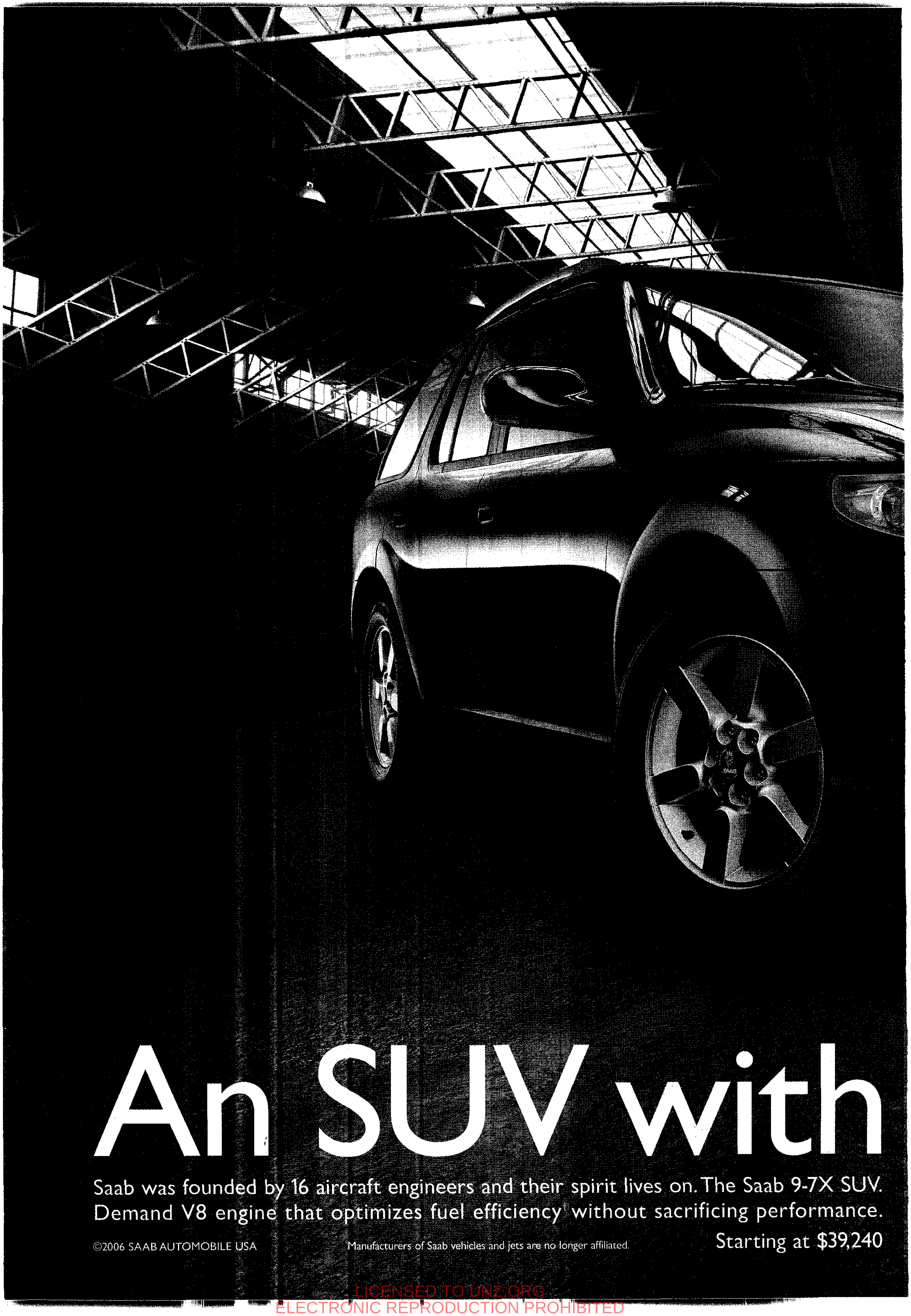

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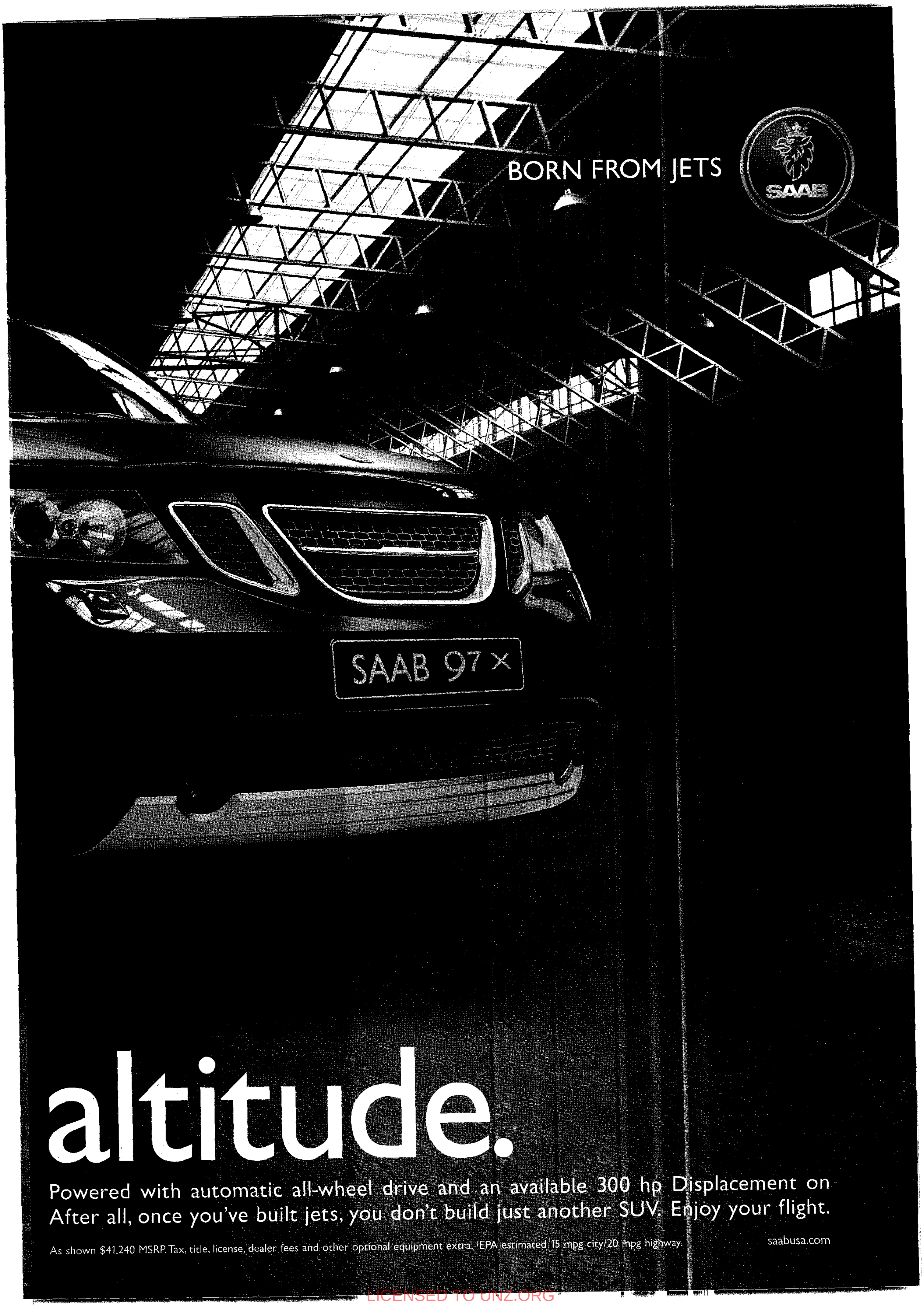

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

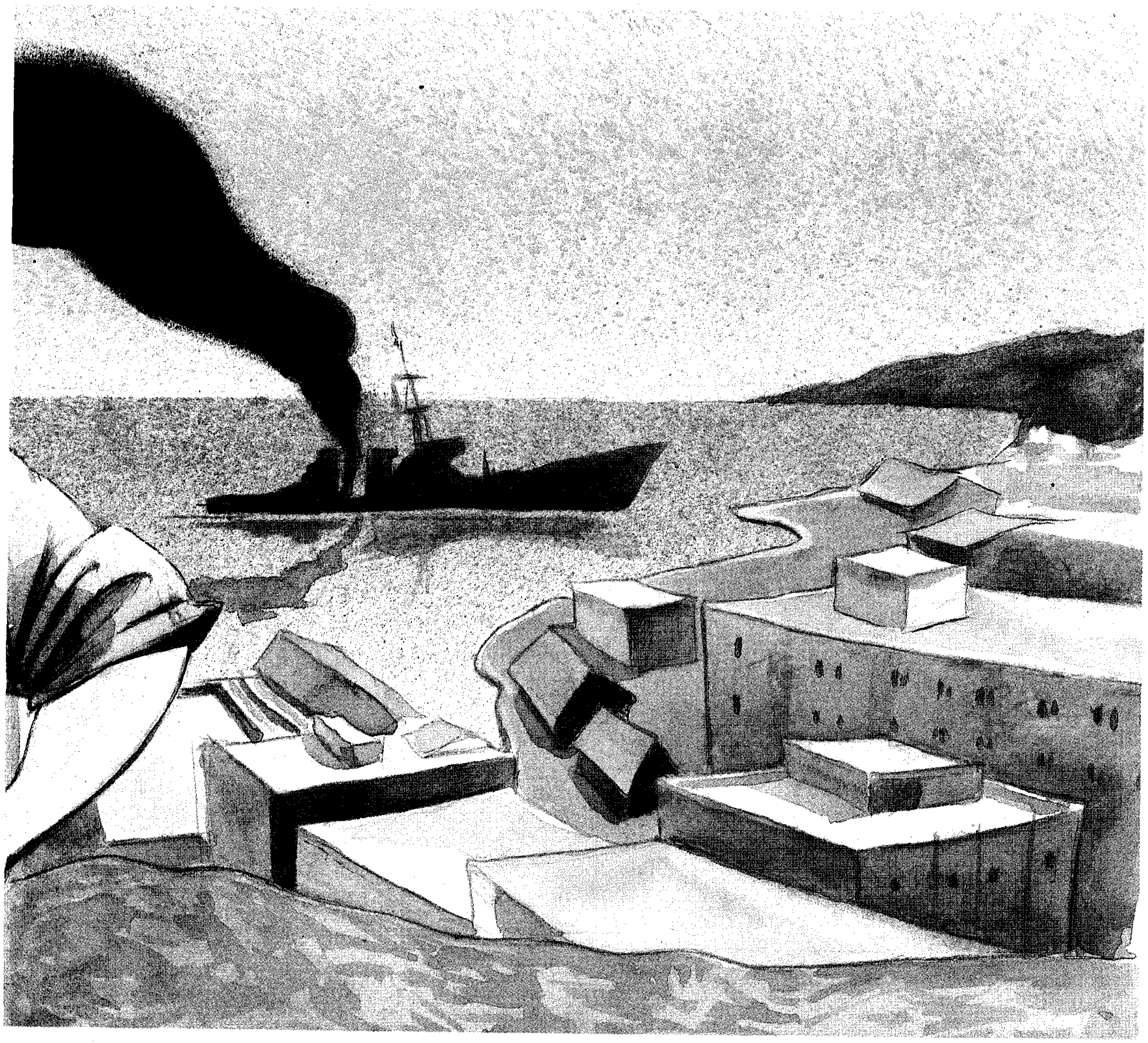
THE AGENT

Did the C.I.A. stop an F.B.I. detective from preventing 9/11?

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

On October 12, 2000, in the deep-water port of Aden, Yemen, the U.S.S. Cole, a guided-missile destroyer weighing eighty-three hundred tons, was docked at a fuelling buoy. The Cole, which cost a billion dollars to build, was one of the most "survivable" ships in the U.S. Navy, with seventy tons of armor, a hull that could withstand an explosion of fifty-one thousand pounds per square inch, and stealth technology designed to make the ship less visible to radar. As the Cole filled its tank, a fibreglass fishing boat containing plastic explosives approached. Two men brought the skiff to a halt amidships, smiled and waved, then stood at attention. The symbolism of this moment was exactly what Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, had hoped for when he approved a plan to attack an American naval vessel. "The destroyer represented the West," bin Laden said later. "The small boat represented Muhammad."

The shock wave from the blast shattered windows onshore. Two miles away, people thought there had been an earth-



quake. The fireball that rose from the waterline swallowed a sailor who had leaned over the rail to see what the men in the skiff were up to. The blast opened a hole, forty feet by forty feet, in the port side of the ship, tearing apart sailors belowdecks who were waiting for lunch. Seventeen of them perished, and thirty-nine were wounded. Several sailors swam through the blast hole to escape the flames. The great man-of-war looked like a gutted animal.

It was Al Qaeda's second successful strike against American targets. In August, 1998, operatives had bombed the United States Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania simultaneously, killing two hundred and twenty-four people. Yet an important part of the Cole plot had failed: Fahd al-Quso, a member of Al Qaeda's support team in Aden, was supposed to videotape the blast for propaganda purposes, but he slept through a morning alarm and did not set up his camera in time. Quso was in a taxi at the moment of the explosion, and he immediately went into hiding.

Shortly after the attack, Ali Soufan, a twenty-nine-year-old Lebanese-American, was driving across the Brooklyn Bridge when he received a page from the New York office of the F.B.I., where he was employed as a special agent. He was told to report to work at once. At the time, Soufan was the only F.B.I. agent in the city who spoke Arabic, and one of only eight in the country. He had joined the New York office in the fall of 1997, and his talents were quickly spotted by John O'Neill, the head of the F.B.I.'s National Security Division, which is devoted to combatting terrorism. The following February, when bin Laden issued a fatwa declaring war on America, Soufan wrote a trenchant report on Islamic fundamentalism that O'Neill distributed to his supervisors. After the 1998 embassy bombings, Soufan helped assem-

Ali Soufan, as the F.B.I.'s lead investigator on the U.S.S. Cole bombing, suspected a larger Al Qaeda plot.

ble the initial evidence linking them to bin Laden. Soufan's language skills, his relentlessness, and his roots in the Middle East made him invaluable in helping the F.B.I. understand Al Qaeda, an organization that few Americans were even aware of before the embassy bombings. O'Neill, who had joined the F.B.I. twenty-five years earlier, referred to the young agent as a "national treasure." Despite Soufan's youth and his relatively short tenure, O'Neill placed him in charge of the Cole investigation. As it turned out, Soufan became America's best chance to stop the attacks of September 11th.

Soufan speaks rapidly, and there is still a hint of Lebanon in his voice. He has an open face and an engaging smile, although there are circles under his eyes from too many long nights. Soufan is a Muslim, but he doesn't follow any particular school of Islam; instead, he is drawn to mystical thought, especially that of Kahlil Gibran, the Lebanese-American poet. He told me that he has an interest in the Kabbalah, because "it appeared at a time when the political environment for the Jews was so harsh that they used this philosophy to escape their anguish." When he wants to relax, he watches reruns of "Seinfeld"—he's seen every episode three or four times—or Bugs Bunny cartoons. One of his favorite writers is Karen Armstrong, whose biographies of Muhammad and the Buddha knit together history and religion in a way that makes sense to him.

Soufan grew up in Lebanon during the calamitous civil war, when cities were destroyed and terrorists were empowered by lawlessness and chaos. His father was a journalist in Beirut, and as a child Soufan helped out at the business magazine his father produced, often carrying galleys to the printshop. In 1987, when Soufan was sixteen, the family moved to the United States. Soufan's most vivid initial impression of his adopted country was that it was safe. "Also, it allowed me to dream," he said.

Soufan lived in Pennsylvania, and he never suffered from prejudice because he was a Muslim Arab. In high school, he won many academic awards. He attended Mansfield University, in central Pennsylvania, where he was elected president of the student government. In 1997, he received a master's degree in international relations from Villanova University, outside Philadelphia. He initially planned to continue his studies in a Ph.D. program. But he had developed a fascination with the U.S. Constitution—in particular, with its guarantees of freedom of speech, religion, and assembly, and the right to a speedy trial. "People who are born into this system may take it for granted," he said. "You don't know how important these rights are if you haven't lived in a country where you can be arrested or killed and not even know why." Like many naturalized citizens, Soufan felt indebted for the new life he had been given. Although he was poised for an academic career, he decided—"almost as a joke," he says—to send his résumé to the F.B.I. He thought it was nearly inconceivable that the bureau would hire someone with his background. Yet in July, 1997, a letter arrived instructing him to report to the F.B.I. Academy, in Quantico, Virginia, in two weeks.

Upon graduation, Soufan went to the New York bureau. He was soon assigned to the I-40 squad, which concentrated mainly on the Islamist paramilitary group Hamas, but, in 1998, on the day after the East African embassy bombings, O'Neill drafted him into I-49, which had become the lead unit in the F.B.I.'s investigation of Al Qaeda.

O'Neill was one of a few top managers in the F.B.I. who recognized early the danger that Al Qaeda posed to America. His intensity was unyielding, and his manner was often abrasive; he could be brutal not only to those under him but to superiors who he felt were not fully committed to an investigation. Soufan proved to be a tireless ally, willing to work nights and holidays. "O'Neill adored him, and Ali felt the same way," Carlos Fernandez, an agent who knew both men well, observed. "They were equals, in many ways. If you say something to Ali, he'll remember it, word for word, ten years from now. John was also great at remembering names and connecting the dots. They could go on for hours, putting things together." The fact that a novice like Soufan had direct access to O'Neill aroused some resentment among the other agents, but the bureau had nobody else with his skills and dedication. "John and I often talked about the need to clone Ali," Kenneth Maxwell, an F.B.I. official who was then Soufan's superior, told me.

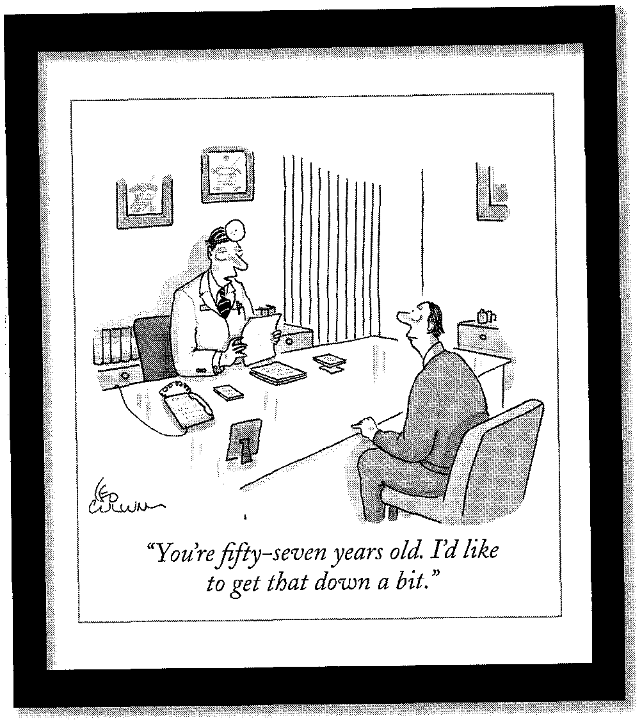
The afternoon of the Cole bombing, Soufan and a few dozen other agents flew to Yemen to begin looking for evidence that could be used against Al Qaeda in court. (A larger contingent, which included O'Neill, was held up in Germany for a week, waiting for permission to enter the country.) Yemen was a particularly difficult place to start a terrorist investigation, as it was filled with active Al Qaeda cells and with sympathizers at very high levels of government. On television, Yemeni politicians called for jihad against America. When the agents landed in Aden, the day after the attack, Soufan looked out at a detachment of the Yemen Special Forces, who wore yellow uniforms with old Russian helmets; each soldier was aiming an AK-47 at the U.S. plane. A jittery, twelve-man hostage-rescue team, which had been sent along to protect the F.B.I. agents, responded by brandishing their M4s and handguns. Soufan realized that everyone might die on the tarmac if he didn't do something quickly. He opened the plane's door. One Yemeni soldier was holding a walkie-talkie. Soufan walked directly toward him, carrying a bottle of water as the guns followed him. It was a hundred and ten degrees outside.

"You look thirsty," Soufan said, in Arabic, to the officer with the walkie-talkie. He handed him the bottle.

"Is it American water?" the officer asked.

Soufan assured him that it was, adding that he had American water for the other soldiers as well. The Yemenis considered the water such a precious commodity that some would not drink it. With this simple act of friendship, the soldiers lowered their weapons.

Soufan divided the agents on the ground into four teams. The first three were responsible for forensics, intelligence, and security; the last was devoted


"You're fifty-seven years old. I'd like to get that down a bit."

OWN THE ORIGINAL

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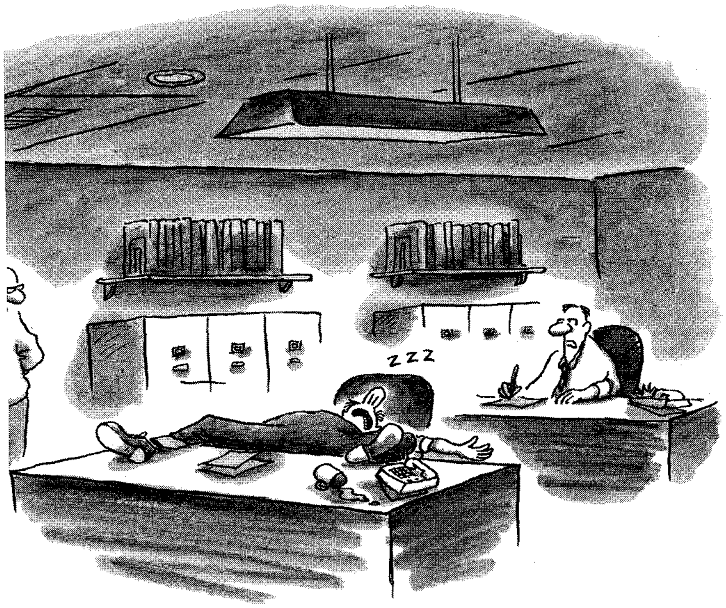

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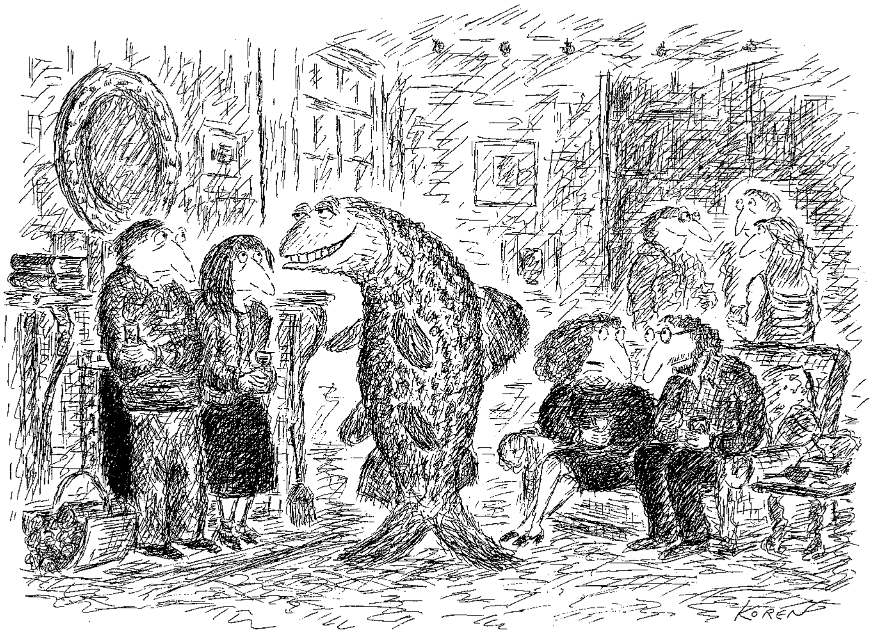
the F.B.I. was not needed on the case, but O'Neill and Soufan pointed out that the sooner they could interrogate suspects linked to the Cole bombing the sooner they might obtain intelligence that could destroy Al Qaeda. The following night, Qamish announced, "I have your photos for you." Soufan immediately sent Khallad's photo to the C.I.A. He also faxed it to an F.B.I. agent in Islamabad, Pakistan; the agent showed it to Soufan's source in Afghanistan, who identified the man as Khallad, the Al Qaeda lieutenant. This suggested strongly that Al Qaeda was behind the Cole attack.

Another break came that same evening, when a twelve-year-old boy named Hani went to the local police. He said that he had been fishing on a pier when the bombers placed their skiff in the water. One of the men had paid the boy a hundred Yemeni riyals—about sixty cents—to watch his Nissan truck and boat trailer, but he never returned. When the police heard Hani's story, they locked him in jail and arrested his father as well.

After repeated requests, the Americans got permission to interview the boy and to examine the launch site. Hani was scared, but he provided a description of the bombers: one was heavy, and the other was "handsome." An Arabic-speaking naval investigator named Rob-



"That's one very boring salmon."

• •

ert McFadden offered the boy some candy. He then said that the bombers had invited him and his family to take a ride in the boat, which was white, with red carpeting on the floor. When Soufan heard this, he deduced that the bombers had been trying to determine how much weight the skiff could carry.

The abandoned truck and trailer were still at the launch site. It was a major mistake on the part of Al Qaeda not to have retrieved them. By checking registration records, investigators connected the truck and trailer to a house in a neighborhood of Aden called Burayqah. When Soufan went to the house, which was surrounded by a wall and a gate, he had an eerie feeling: this residence had a striking resemblance to the house in Nairobi where the bomb for the 1998 embassy attack had been made. Inside, in the master bedroom, there was a prayer rug oriented to the north, toward Mecca. The bathroom sink was full of body hair; the bombers had shaved and performed ritual ablutions before going to their deaths. Soufan's men collected a razor and hair samples, which might provide the F.B.I. with the DNA evidence necessary to establish the identity of the killers. (So far, the investigators at the Cole site had found only a couple of bone fragments that didn't belong to American sailors.)

Investigators found that another house in Aden had been rented by the terrorists; it was registered to "Abda Hussein Muhammad." The name was dimly familiar to Soufan. At one point during the Nairobi investigation, a witness had mentioned an Al Qaeda operative named Nasheri who had proposed attacking an American vessel in Aden. Soufan did some research and discovered that Nasheri's full name was Abdul Rahim Muhammad Hussein Abda al-Nasheri. The middle names were the same, just reversed. Soufan's hunch paid off when American agents discovered a car in Aden that was registered to Nasheri. It was another strong link between Al Qaeda and the Cole attack.

A couple of weeks after the bombing, Yemeni authorities placed Badawi and Quso, the two Al Qaeda operatives, under arrest, apparently as a precaution. Soufan continued to press General Qamish to let him interrogate the men directly, and finally, after several weeks, Qamish relented.

Soufan spent hours preparing for the encounters, with the goal of finding some common ground with his subjects. Often, the bond centered on religion. "Ali was very spiritual," Carlos Fernandez recalled. "In Yemen, he was reading the Koran at night. He would talk to these guys about their beliefs. Sometimes, he would actually convince them that their understanding of Islam was all wrong."

In the interrogation of Badawi, Soufan learned that the skiff had been purchased in Saudi Arabia. Soufan questioned Quso over the course of several days. Quso was small, wiry, and insolent, with a wispy beard that he kept tugging on. Before Soufan could even begin, a local intelligence official came into the room and kissed Quso on both cheeks—a shocking signal that the security services were sympathetic to the jihadis. McFadden, who participated in the interrogations, recalled that Soufan was not intimidated. He said, "Ali was a natural interviewer, and he was able to dislodge Quso from his circle of comfort." Eventually, Quso began to open up. He had been in Afghanistan, and boasted that he had fought beside bin Laden. He said that bin Laden had inspired him with his speeches about expelling the infidels from the Arabian peninsula—in particular, American troops stationed in Saudi Arabia.

Soufan asked if Quso ever planned to get married. A shy, embarrassed smile appeared. "Well, then, help yourself out," Soufan urged him. "Tell me something."

Finally, Quso admitted that he was supposed to film the bombing but had overslept. (The Yemenis later found a video camera at his sister's house.) He also said that several months before the Cole attack he and one of the bombers had delivered thirty-six thousand dollars to Khallad, the one-legged Al Qaeda lieutenant, in Bangkok. The money, Quso added, was meant only to buy Khallad a new prosthesis.

Soufan was suspicious of this explanation. Why had Al Qaeda sent money out of Yemen just before the Cole bombing took place? Money always flowed toward an operation, not away from it. He wondered if Al Qaeda had a bigger plot under way.

The C.I.A. had officials in Yemen to collect intelligence about Al Qaeda, and Soufan asked them if they knew anything about a new operation, perhaps in Southeast Asia. They professed to be as puzzled as he was. In November, 2000, a month after the Cole bombing, Soufan sent the agency the first of several official queries. On Soufan's behalf, the director of the F.B.I. sent a letter to the director of the C.I.A., formally asking for information about Khallad, and whether there might have been an Al Qaeda meeting somewhere in Southeast Asia before the bombing. The agency said that it had nothing. Soufan trusted this response; he thought that he had a good working relationship with the agency.

Quso had told Soufan that when he and the Cole bomber went to Bangkok to meet Khallad they had stayed in the Washington Hotel. F.B.I. agents went through phone records to verify his story. They found calls between the hotel and Quso's house, in Yemen. They also noticed that there were calls to both places from a pay phone in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In April, 2001, Soufan sent another official teletype to the C.I.A., along with the passport photo of Khallad. He asked whether the telephone numbers had any significance, and whether there was any connection between the numbers and Khallad. The C.I.A. said that it could not help him.

In fact, the C.I.A. knew a lot about Khallad and his ties to Al Qaeda. The F.B.I. and the C.I.A. have long quarrelled over bureaucratic turf, and their mandates place them at odds. The ultimate goal of the bureau in gathering intelligence is to gain convictions for crimes; for the agency, intelligence itself is the object. If the agency had responded candidly to Soufan's requests, it would have revealed its knowledge of an Al Qaeda cell that was already forming inside the United States. But the agency kept this intelligence to itself.

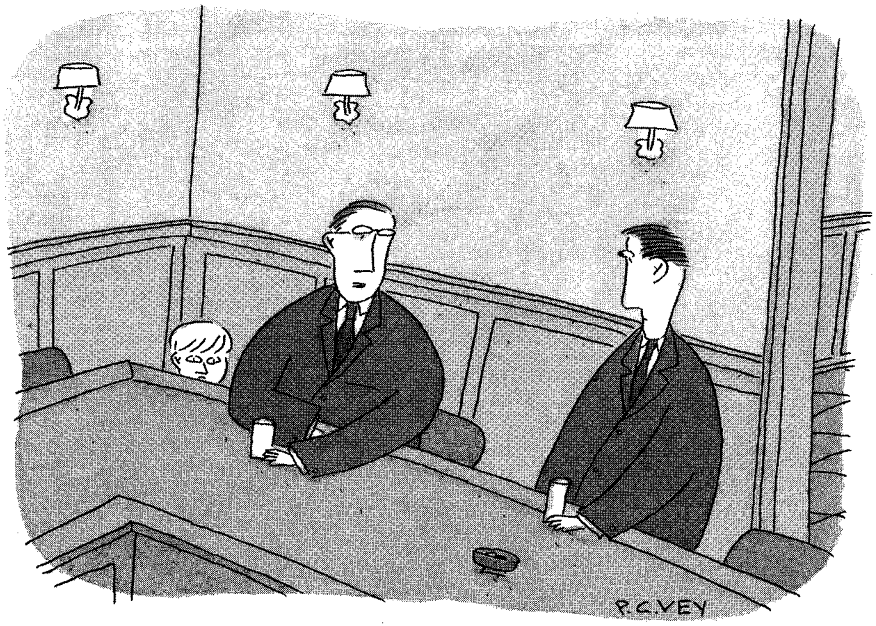
"I come from a generation of F.B.I. agents who have always worked closely with the C.I.A.," Soufan told me. At the time he joined the bureau, law enforcement had become internationalized. In the nineteen-nineties, his mentor, O'Neill, had established close relations with foreign police services, an approach that sometimes encroached on the C.I.A.'s territory. In 1999, O'Neill sent Soufan and his supervisor, Pasquale D'Amuro, to Jordan, where authorities had discovered that jihadis linked to Al Qaeda were plotting to bomb tourist sites and hotels. Information that the Jordanians shared with Soufan made him realize that the intelligence that the C.I.A. was reporting was deeply flawed. His analysis forced local C.I.A. representatives to withdraw twelve cables that they had sent to agency headquarters. On the floor of the C.I.A.'s station in Amman, Soufan discovered a box of evidence that had been given to the agency by Jordanian intelligence. Such evidence is what the F.B.I. needs in order to mount prosecutions, and no one had examined the box's contents or turned it over to the bureau. In the box, Soufan found a map of the proposed bomb sites, which proved crucial in the prosecutions of twenty-eight plotters in Jordan, twenty-two of whom were convicted. Soufan's success embarrassed the C.I.A., deepening the rift between the two institutions. "The C.I.A. people couldn't stand the fact that Ali's opinion and analysis were correct," an F.B.I. counterterrorism official who worked with Soufan told me. "He was an Arabic speaker and an F.B.I. agent on the ground who was running circles around them."

Nevertheless, the C.I.A. recognized Soufan's abilities and repeatedly tried to recruit him. "Come over to the Dark Side," an agency operative once said to him. "You know you're interested." Soufan said that he just laughed.

Indeed, some of the C.I.A.'s best information about Al Qaeda came from the F.B.I. In 1998, F.B.I. investigators found an essential clue—a phone number in Yemen that functioned as a virtual switchboard for the terror network. The bombers in East Africa called that number before and after the attacks; so did Osama bin Laden. The number belonged to a jihadi named Ahmed al-Hada. By combing through the records of all the calls made to and from that number, F.B.I. investigators constructed a map of Al Qaeda's global organization. The phone line was monitored as soon as it was discovered. But the C.I.A., as the primary organization for gathering foreign intelligence, had jurisdiction over conversations on the Hada phone, and did not provide the F.B.I. with the information it was getting about Al Qaeda's plans.

A conversation on the Hada phone at the end of 1999 mentioned a forthcoming meeting of Al Qaeda operatives in Malaysia. The C.I.A. learned the name of one participant, Khaled al-Mihdhar, and the first name of another: Nawaf. Both men were Saudi citizens. The C.I.A. did not pass this intelligence to the F.B.I.

However, the C.I.A. did share the information with Saudi authorities, who told the agency that Mihdhar and a man named Nawaf al-Hazmi were members of Al Qaeda. Based on this intelligence, the C.I.A. broke into a hotel room in Dubai where Mihdhar was staying, en route to Malaysia. The operatives photocopied Mihdhar's passport and faxed it to Alec Station, the C.I.A. unit devoted to tracking bin Laden. Inside the passport was the critical information that Mihdhar had a U.S. visa. The



"The wife thinks he's at summer camp."

agency did not alert the F.B.I. or the State Department so that Mihdhar's name could be put on a terror watch list, which would have prevented him from entering the U.S.

The C.I.A. asked Malaysian authorities to provide surveillance of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur, which took place on January 5, 2000, at a condominium overlooking a golf course designed by Jack Nicklaus. The condo was owned by a Malaysian businessman who had ties to Al Qaeda. The pay phone that Soufan had queried the agency about was directly in front of the condo. Khallad used it to place calls to Quso in Yemen. Although the C.I.A. later denied that it knew anything about the phone, the number was recorded in the Malaysians' surveillance log, which was given to the agency.

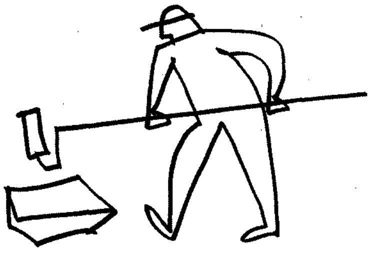
At the time of the Kuala Lumpur meeting, Special Branch, the Malaysian secret service, photographed about a dozen Al Qaeda associates outside the condo and visiting nearby Internet cafés. These pictures were turned over to the C.I.A. The meeting was not wiretapped; had it been, the agency might have uncovered the plots that culminated in the bombing of the Cole and the September 11, 2001, attacks. On January 8th, Special Branch notified the C.I.A. that three of the men who had been at the meeting—Mihdhar, Hazmi, and Khallad—were travelling together to Bangkok. There Khallad met with Quso and one of the suicide bombers of the Cole. Quso gave Khallad the thirty-six thousand dollars, which was most likely used to buy tickets to Los Angeles for Mihdhar and Hazmi and provide them with living expenses in the U.S. Both men ended up on planes involved in the September 11th attacks.

In March, the C.I.A. learned that Hazmi had flown to Los Angeles two months earlier, on January 15th. Had the agency checked the flight manifest, it would have noticed that Mihdhar was travelling with him. Once again, the agency neglected to inform the F.B.I. or the State Department that at least one Al Qaeda operative was in the country.

Although the C.I.A. was legally bound to share this kind of information with the bureau, it was protective of sensitive intelligence. The agency sometimes feared that F.B.I. prosecutions resulting from such intelligence might compromise its relationships with foreign services, although there were safeguards to protect confidential information. The C.I.A. was particularly wary of O'Neill, who demanded control of any case that touched on an F.B.I. investigation. Many C.I.A. officials disliked him and feared that he could not be trusted with sensitive intelligence. "O'Neill was duplicitous," Michael Scheuer, the official who founded Alec Station but has now left the C.I.A., told me. "He had no concerns outside of making the bureau look good." Several of O'Neill's subordinates suggested that the C.I.A. hid the information out of personal animosity. "They hated John," the F.B.I. counterterrorism official assigned to Alec Station told me. "They knew that John would have marched in there and taken control of that case."

The C.I.A. may also have been protecting an overseas operation and was afraid that the F.B.I. would expose it. Moreover, Mihdhar and Hazmi could have seemed like attractive recruitment possibilities—the C.I.A. was desperate for a source inside Al Qaeda, having failed to penetrate the inner circle or even to place someone in the training camps, even though they were largely open to anyone who showed up. However, once Mihdhar and Hazmi entered the United States they were the province of the F.B.I. The C.I.A. has no legal authority to operate inside the country.

In the end, the C.I.A.'s failure to inform the F.B.I. may be best explained by the fact that the agency was drowning in a flood of threats and warnings, and simply did not see the pivotal importance of this intelligence. Whatever the reason for the C.I.A.'s lapse, many F.B.I. investigators remain furious that they were not informed of the presence of Al Qaeda operatives inside America. Mihdhar and Hazmi arrived twenty months before September 11th. Kenneth Maxwell, Soufan's former supervisor, told me, "Two Al Qaeda guys living in California—are you kidding me? We would have been on them like white on snow: physical surveillance, electronic surveillance, a special unit devoted entirely to them." Of course, the F.B.I. had other opportunities to prevent September 11th. In July, 2001, an F.B.I. agent in Phoenix suggested interviewing Arabs enrolled in American flight schools; a month later, the bureau's Minnesota office requested permission to aggressively investigate Zacarias Moussaoui, who later confessed to being an Al Qaeda associate. Both proposals were rejected by F.B.I. supervisors. But Mihdhar and Hazmi were directly involved in the September 11th conspiracy. Because of their connection to bin Laden, who had a federal indictment against him, the F.B.I. had all the authority it needed to use every investigative technique to penetrate and disrupt the Al Qaeda cell. Instead, the hijackers were free to develop their plot until it was too late to stop them.



In Yemen, the security situation deteriorated rapidly. Soufan and the other F.B.I. agents were quartered at the Aden Hotel, crammed in with other U.S. military and government employees, including Marine guards, and billeted three and four to a room; several dozen slept on bedrolls in the hotel ballroom. Gunfire erupted outside the hotel so frequently that the agents slept in their clothes, with their weapons at their sides. Agents learned from a mechanic in Aden that, after the bombing, some men brought to his shop a truck similar to the one used by the bombers; the men wanted to have metal plates installed in such a way that they could direct the force of an explosion. Certainly, the most tempting target for such a bomb would be the Aden Hotel. It wasn't clear that the Yemeni government troops who were guarding the hotel with machine-gun nests would truly protect the Americans. "We were prisoners," an agent recalled.

One night, shots were fired on the street while O'Neill was running a meeting inside the hotel. The marines and the hostage-rescue team adopted defensive positions. Soufan ventured out, unarmed, to talk to the Yemeni troops.

"Hey, Ali!" O'Neill called out. "Be careful!" He raced down the steps of the hotel to make sure Soufan was wearing his flak jacket. Frustration, stress, and danger, along with the enforced intimacy

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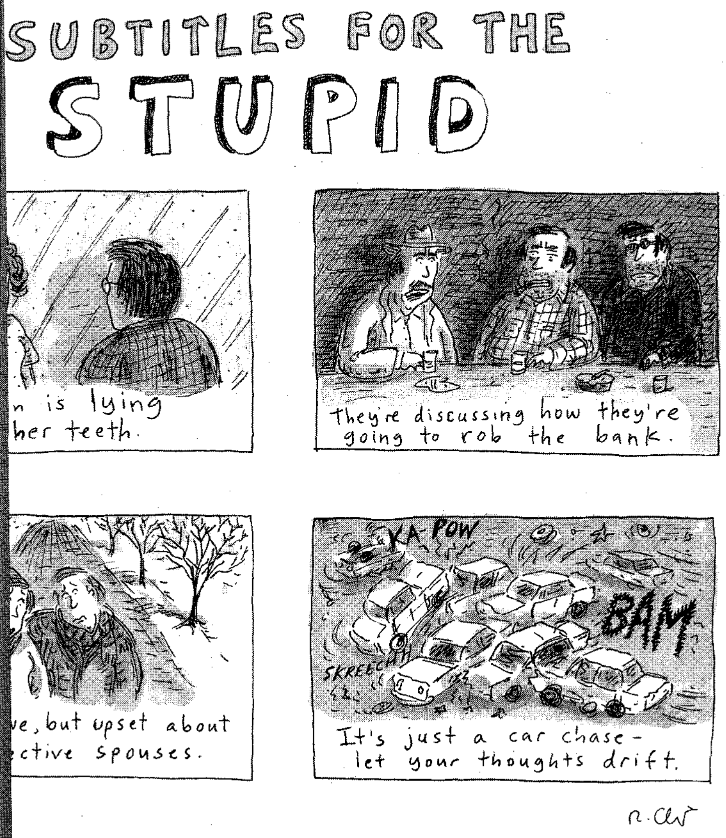
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SKREEECH
It's just a car chase - let your thoughts drift.

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That summer, Wilshire asked an F.B.I. analyst to review the material on the Malaysia meeting, but he did not reveal that some of the participants might be in the United States. More important, he conveyed none of the urgency reflected in his e-mail; he told the analyst that she should examine the material in her free time. She didn't get around to it until the end of July.

Wilshire did want to know, however, what the F.B.I. knew. He asked Dina Corsi, another F.B.I. analyst, to show three surveillance photos from the Malaysia meeting to several I-49 agents. The pictures showed Mihdhar and Hazmi and a man who, the C.I.A. believed, resembled Quso, the Cole cameraman. Wilshire told Corsi that one of the men was named Khaled al-Mihdhar, but he did not explain why the pictures had been taken, and he did not mention that Mihdhar had a U.S. visa.

According to the 9/11 Commission Report, on June 11th a C.I.A. supervisor went with the F.B.I. analyst and

Corsi to New York to meet with F.B.I. case agents on the Cole investigation; Soufan, who was still in Yemen, did not attend. The meeting started in mid-morning, with the New York agents briefing the C.I.A. supervisor, Clark Shannon, for three or four hours on the progress of their investigation. Corsi then showed the three Malaysia photographs to her F.B.I. colleagues. They were high-quality surveillance photos. One, shot from a low angle, showed Mihdhar and Hazmi standing beside a tree in Malaysia. Shannon wanted to know if the agents recognized anyone. The I-49 agents asked who was in the pictures, and when and where they had been taken. "Were there any other photographs of this meeting?" one of the F.B.I. agents demanded. Shannon refused to say. Corsi promised that "in the days and weeks to come" she would try to get permission to pass that information along. The meeting became heated. The F.B.I. agents sensed that these photographs pertained directly to crimes they were trying to solve, but they couldn't elicit any further information from Shannon. Corsi finally dropped the name Khaled al-Mihdhar. Steve Bongardt, Soufan's top assistant in the Cole investigation, asked Shannon to provide a date of birth or a passport number to go with Mihdhar's name. A name by itself was not sufficient to prevent his entry into the United States. Bongardt had just returned from Pakistan with a list of thirty names of suspected Al Qaeda associates and their dates of birth, which he had given to the State Department. That was standard procedure—the first thing most investigators would do. But Shannon declined to provide the additional information. Top C.I.A. officials had not authorized him to disclose the vital details of Mihdhar's U.S. visa, his association with Hazmi, and their affiliation with Khallad and Al Qaeda.

There was a fourth photograph of the Malaysia meeting that Shannon did not produce. That was a picture of Khallad, the one-legged operative. Thanks to Soufan's interrogation of Quso, the Cole investigators had an active file on Khallad and were preparing to indict him. Knowledge of that fourth photo would likely have prompted O'Neill to demand that the C.I.A. turn over all information relating to Khallad and his associates. By withholding the picture of Khallad attending the meeting with the future hijackers, the C.I.A. may in effect have allowed the September 11th plot to proceed. That summer, Mihdhar returned to Yemen and then went to Saudi Arabia, where, presumably, he helped the remaining hijackers secure entry into the United States. Two days after the frustrating June 11th meeting, Mihdhar received another American visa from the consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Since the C.I.A. had not given his name to the State Department to post on its watch list, Mihdhar arrived in New York on the Fourth of July.

The June 11th meeting was the culmination of a strange trend in the U.S. government toward hiding information from the people who most needed it. In this regard, the F.B.I. was as guilty as the C.I.A. A federal law at the time prohibited the sharing of information arising from grand-jury testimony, but the F.B.I. took it as a nearly absolute bar to revealing any investigative evidence and, as a result, repeatedly turned down requests for information from other intelligence agencies. (The Joint Congressional Inquiry on 9/11 claimed that the law "came to be used simply as an excuse for not sharing information.")

In 1995, the Justice Department established a policy, known as "the Wall," which regulated the exchange of foreign intelligence information between agents and criminal investigators. Managers at F.B.I. headquarters misinterpreted the policy, turning it into a straitjacket for their own investigators. Intelligence agents were warned that sharing such information with criminal agents could mean the end of their careers. The Wall, the F.B.I. decided, separated even people who were on the same squad. The F.B.I. also began withholding intelligence from the White House. Every morning on the classified computers of the National Security Council, there were at least a hundred reports, from the C.I.A., the N.S.A., and other intelligence branches, but the F.B.I. never disseminated information.

The C.I.A. embraced the idea of the Wall with equal vigor. The agency frequently decided not to share intelligence with the F.B.I. on the ground that it would compromise "sensitive sources and methods." For example, the C.I.A. collected other crucial information about Mihdhar that it did not provide to the F.B.I. Mihdhar, it turned out, was the son-in-law of Ahmed al-Hada, the Al Qaeda loyalist in Yemen whose phone number operated as the network's switchboard. After arriving in

"I need you to pretend to care about design for twenty minutes."

New York on July 4th, Mihdhar flew to San Diego and rented an apartment. From there, he made eight calls to the Hada phone to talk to his wife, who was about to give birth. In the I-49 squad's office, there was a link chart showing the connections between Hada's phone and other phones around the world. Had a line been drawn from Hada's Yemen home to Mihdhar's San Diego apartment, Al Qaeda's presence in America would have been glaringly obvious.

After September 11th, the C.I.A. claimed that it had divulged Mihdhar's identity to the F.B.I. in a timely manner; indeed, both George Tenet, the agency's director, and Cofer Black, the head of its counterterrorism division, testified to Congress that this was the case. Later, the 9/11 Commission concluded that the statements of both were false. The C.I.A. was unable to produce evidence proving that the information had been passed to the bureau.

The I-49 squad responded to the secrecy in aggressive and creative ways. When the C.I.A. refused to share intercepts of bin Laden's satellite phone, the squad came up with a plan to build two antennae to capture the signal—one on Palau, in the Pacific, and another on Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean. The squad also constructed an ingenious satellite telephone booth in Kandahar, hoping to provide a convenient facility for jihadis wanting to call home. The agents could listen in on the calls, and they received videos of callers through a camera hidden in the booth. Millions of dollars and thousands of hours of labor were consumed in replicating information that other U.S. officials refused to share. According to Soufan, the I-49 agents were so used to being denied access to intelligence that they bought a CD containing the Pink Floyd song "Another Brick in the Wall." He recalled, "Whenever we got the speech about 'sensitive sources and methods,' we'd just hold up the phone to the CD player and push Play."

Just days before the June 11th meeting took place in the New York office, new threats in Yemen created a security crisis for the Americans. Yemeni authorities arrested eight men who, they said, were part of a plot to blow up the American Embassy, where Soufan and other investigators had taken refuge. Louis Freeh, the director of the F.B.I., acting on O'Neill's recommendation, withdrew the team entirely.

By then, Soufan had a much clearer idea of the relationship between Khallad and the Cole conspirators. In July, 2001, he sent a third formal request to the C.I.A. asking for information about a possible Al Qaeda meeting in Malaysia, and about Khallad's trip to Bangkok to meet with Quso and the Cole suicide bomber. Yet again, the agency did not respond.

On August 22nd, John O'Neill was packing boxes in his office. It was his last day at the F.B.I. He had decided to retire from the bureau after he learned of a damaging leak to the *Times*. The paper had reported that O'Neill's briefcase, containing sensitive documents, was stolen while he was attending an F.B.I. conference in Florida. The briefcase was quickly recovered, and it was determined that none of the sensitive material had been touched, but it ruined his prospects at the bureau.

That day, Soufan came by O'Neill's office to say goodbye. He was going back to Yemen later that afternoon; O'Neill's last act as an F.B.I. agent was to sign the paperwork that would send Soufan's team back into the country. They were determined to arrest the killers of the American sailors, despite the risks of working in such a hostile environment.

The two men walked to a nearby diner. O'Neill ordered a ham-and-cheese sandwich. "You don't want to change your infidel ways?" Soufan kidded him, indicating the ham. "You're gonna go to Hell." O'Neill urged Soufan to visit him in New York when he returned. He had taken a job at the World Trade Center, as the head of security. "I'm going to be just down the road," he said.

Soufan confided that he and his longtime girlfriend had decided to get married. O'Neill gave his blessing. "She has put up with you all this time," he joked. "She must be a good woman."

The week that O'Neill retired from the bureau, the F.B.I. analyst at Alec Station who had been reviewing intelligence on the Malaysia meeting realized that Mihdhar and Hazmi were in the U.S. She passed the information to Dina Corsi, at F.B.I. headquarters. Corsi, alarmed, sent an e-mail to the supervisor of the I-49 squad, ordering the unit to locate the Al Qaeda operatives. But, she added, because of the Wall no criminal investigators could be involved in the search. As it turned out, there was only one intelligence agent available, and he was new. An F.B.I. agent forwarded Corsi's message to Steve Bongardt, Soufan's top assistant. He called her. "Dina, you got to be kidding me!" he said. "Mihdhar is in the country?" He complained that the Wall was a bureaucratic fiction that was preventing investigators from doing their work. In a conversation the next day, he said, "If this guy is in the country, it's not because he's going to fucking Disneyland!" Later, he wrote in an e-mail, "Someday somebody will die—and, Wall or not, the public will not understand why we were not more effective." The new agent's attempt to find Mihdhar and Hazmi proved fruitless.

Three weeks later, on September 11, 2001, Soufan was at the embassy in Sanaa. He spoke on the phone with his fiancée, who told him that the Twin Towers had been attacked. He turned on a television, and watched as the second plane hit. He called O'Neill's cell phone repeatedly, but there was no answer.

The F.B.I. ordered Soufan and the rest of his team in Yemen to evacuate. The morning of September 12th, the C.I.A.'s chief of station in Aden went with the agents to the airport in Sanaa. The C.I.A. official was sitting in the lounge with Soufan when he got a call on his cell phone from F.B.I. headquarters. He told Soufan, "They want to talk to you."

Dina Corsi spoke to Soufan, and told him to stay in Yemen. He was upset. He wanted to return to New York and investigate the attack on America. "This is about that—what happened yesterday," she told him. "Quso is our only lead." She wouldn't tell him any more. Soufan got his luggage off the plane, but he was puzzled. What did Quso, the Cole cameraman, have to do with September 11th?

Robert McFadden, the naval investigator, and several other officials stayed behind to help Soufan. The order from headquarters was to identify the September 11th hijackers "by any means necessary," a directive that Soufan had never seen before. When he returned to the embassy, a fax containing photographs of twenty suspects came over a secure line. Then the C.I.A. chief drew Soufan aside and handed him a manila envelope. Inside were three surveillance photographs and a complete report about the Malaysia meeting—the very material that he had asked for so many times. The Wall had come down. When Soufan realized that the C.I.A. had known for more than a year and a half that two of the hijackers were in the country he ran into the bathroom and threw up. (Soufan's disillusionment with the government was so profound that he eventually quit the bureau; in 2005, he became director of international operations for Giuliani Security and Safety, a company founded by Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former mayor of New York.)

Soufan went to General Qamish's office and demanded to see Quso again. "What does this have to do with the Cole?" Qamish wanted to know. "I'm not talking about the Cole," said Soufan. "Brother John is missing." He started to say something else, but he was unable to continue. General Qamish's eyes also filled with tears.

"Qamish instantly made a decision," McFadden recalls. "He said, 'You tell me what you want, and I'll make it happen.' " Qamish said that Quso was in Aden, and there was one last flight that evening from there to the capital. He called his subordinates on the phone and began shouting, "I want Quso flown in here tonight!" Then the General called the airport and demanded to be patched through to the pilot. "You will not take off until my prisoner is aboard," he ordered him. "You could hear them snapping to attention," McFadden recalled.

At midnight, in a room not far from Qamish's office, Soufan met with Quso, who was in a petulant frame of mind. "Just because something happens in New York or Washington, you don't need to talk to me," he said. Soufan showed him the three surveillance photographs of the Malaysia meeting, which included the Saudi hijackers Mihdhar and Hazmi. Quso thought he remembered seeing them in Al Qaeda camps, but he wasn't certain. "Why are you asking about them?" he wanted to know.

Finally, the next day, Soufan received the fourth photograph of the Malaysia meeting—the picture of Khallad, the mastermind of the Cole operation. The two plots, Soufan instantly realized, were linked, and if the C.I.A. had not withheld information from him he likely would have drawn the connection months before September 11th. He met again with Quso, who identified the figure in the picture as Khallad—the first confirmation of Al Qaeda's responsibility for the September 11th attacks.

Soufan interrogated Quso for three nights, while during the day he wrote reports and did research, sleeping little more than an hour at a time. "He was sick as a dog, but he was getting really good information," his fellow-agent Carlos Fernandez recalled. On the fourth night, Soufan collapsed from exhaustion. "We wanted to medevac him out of there," Fernandez said. "We took him to the emergency room. The kid could barely stand. But he refused to leave, and the next day he was right back at it. None of us had ever seen anything like that." His co-workers began referring to Soufan as "an American hero."

Soufan was intensely aware that the information he was getting was critical, and that perhaps no one else could extract the truth from Quso. Finally, after hours of extended questioning, Quso was shown a photograph of Marwan al-Shehhi, the hijacker who piloted United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into the second tower. Quso identified him, and said that he had met Shehhi in a guesthouse in Kandahar. He remembered that Shehhi had been ill during Ramadan and that the emir of the guesthouse had taken care of him. The emir's name was Abu Jandal.

As it happened, Abu Jandal was also in Yemeni custody, and the Americans arranged to interview him. He was a large, powerful man with a dark beard. "What are these infidels doing here?" he demanded. He took a plastic chair and turned it around, sitting with his arms crossed and his back to the interrogators. After some coaxing, Soufan got Abu Jandal to face him, but he refused to look him in the eye. Abu Jandal did want to talk, however; he delivered a lengthy, rapid-fire rant against America.

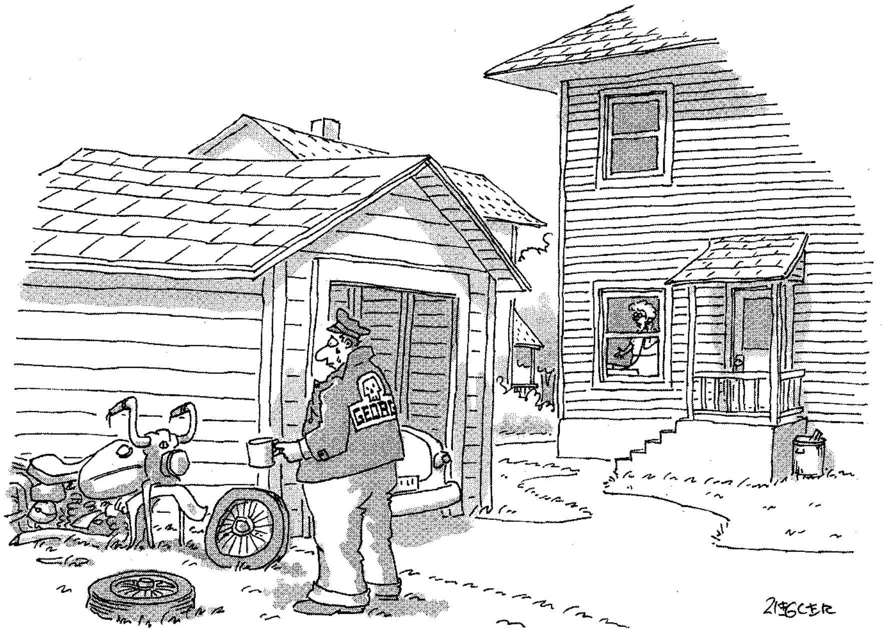
Soufan realized that the prisoner was trained in counter-interrogation techniques, since he easily agreed to things that Soufan already knew—that he had fought in Bosnia, Somalia, and Afghanistan, for instance—and denied everything else. Abu Jandal portrayed himself as a good Muslim who had considered jihad but had become disillusioned. He thought of himself not as a killer but as a revolutionary who was trying to rid the world of evil, which he believed came mainly from the United States, a country he knew practically nothing about.

As the nights passed, Abu Jandal warmed to Soufan. He told him that he was in his early thirties, older than most jihadis. He had grown up in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia—bin Laden's home town—and he was well read in religion. He seemed to enjoy drinking tea and lecturing the Americans on the radical Islamist view of history; his sociability was a weak spot.

Soufan flattered him and engaged him in theological debate. Listening to Abu Jandal's diatribes, Soufan picked up several useful details: that he had grown tired of fighting; that he was troubled by the fact that bin Laden had sworn loyalty to Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, in Afghanistan; and that he worried about his two children, one of whom had a bone disease. Soufan also noted that Abu Jandal declined some pastries, because he was a diabetic.

The next night, the Americans brought some sugarless wafers, a courtesy that Abu Jandal acknowledged. Soufan also brought him a history of America, in Arabic. Abu Jandal was confounded by Soufan: a moderate Muslim who could argue about Islam with him, who was in the F.B.I., and who loved America. He quickly read the history that Soufan gave him and was amazed to learn of the American Revolution and its struggle against tyranny.

Soufan, meanwhile, was trying to determine the boundaries of Abu Jandal's moral landscape. He asked him about the proper way to wage jihad. Abu Jandal eagerly talked about how a warrior should treat his adversary in battle. The Koran and other Islamic texts discuss the ethics of conduct in warfare. Where do they sanction suicide bombing? Soufan asked him. Abu Jandal said that the enemy had an advantage in weapons, but the suicide bombers evened the score. "These are our missiles," he said. What about women and children? Soufan asked. Aren't they supposed to be protected? Soufan pointed to the bombings of the American embassies in East Africa. He recalled a woman on a bus in front of the Nairobi embassy, who, after the bomb exploded, was found clutching her baby, trying to protect him from the flames. Both had been incinerated. What sin had the mother committed? What about the soul of her child? "God will give them their rewards in the Hereafter," Abu Jandal said. Besides, he added, "can you imagine how many joined bin Laden after the embassy bombings? Hundreds came and asked to be martyrs." Soufan countered that many of the East African victims—perhaps most of them—were Muslims. Several times, Abu Jandal quoted clerical authorities or chapters from the Koran, but he found that Soufan was more than a match for him on theological matters. Abu Jandal finally asserted that, because the embassy bombings were on a Friday, when the victims should have been in the mosque, they were not real Muslims.



"Can he call you back? He and his midlife crisis are celebrating their tenth anniversary."

• •

On the fifth night, Soufan slammed a news magazine on the table between them. The magazine had photographs of the airplanes crashing into the Twin Towers—graphic shots of people trapped in the buildings and jumping a hundred stories. "Bin Laden did this," Soufan told him. Abu Jandal had heard about the attacks, but he didn't know many details. He studied the pictures in amazement. He said that they looked like a "Hollywood production," but the scale of the atrocity visibly shook him.

Soufan and Abu Jandal were joined in the small interrogation room by McFadden and two Yemeni investigators. Everyone sensed that Soufan was closing in. American and allied troops were preparing to go to war in Afghanistan, but they desperately needed more information about the structure of Al Qaeda, the locations of hideouts, and the plans for escape—all of which American intelligence officials hoped Abu Jandal could supply.

Coincidentally, a local Yemeni paper was on a shelf under the coffee table. Soufan showed it to Abu Jandal. The headline read, "TWO HUNDRED YEMENI SOULS PERISH IN NEW YORK ATTACK." (At the time, the death-toll estimates were in the tens of thousands.) Abu Jandal read the headline and drew a breath. "God help us," he muttered. Soufan asked what kind of Muslim would do such a thing. Abu Jandal insisted that the Israelis must have committed the attacks on New York and Washington. "The Sheikh is not that crazy," he said of bin Laden.

Soufan then took out a book of mug shots containing photographs of known Al Qaeda members and of the hijackers. He asked Abu Jandal to identify them. The Yemeni flipped through them quickly and closed the book.

Soufan opened the book again and told him to take his time. "Some of them I have in custody," he said, hoping that Abu Jandal wouldn't realize that the hijackers were all dead. Abu Jandal paused for a half-second on the photograph of Shehhi, the pilot of United Airlines Flight 175, before he started to turn the page. "You're not done with this one," Soufan said. "Ramadan, 1999. He's sick. You're his emir, and you take care of him." Abu Jandal looked at Soufan in shock. "When I ask you a question, I already know the answer," said Soufan. "If you're smart, you'll tell me the truth."

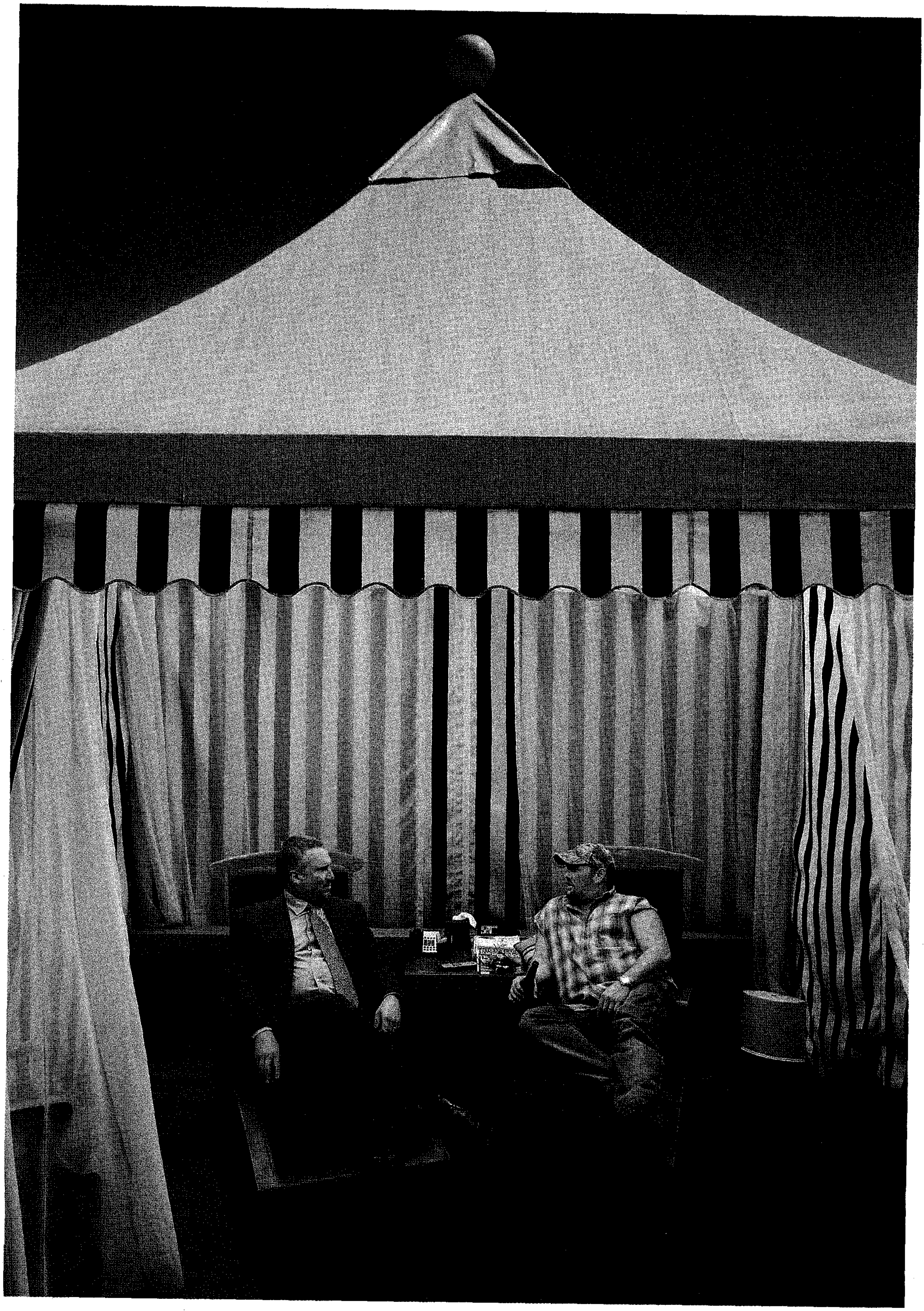
Abu Jandal conceded that he knew Shehhi and gave his Al Qaeda nom de guerre, Abdullah al-Sharqi. He did the same with Khaled al-Mihdhar and five others, including Mohammed Atta, the lead hijacker. But he still insisted that bin Laden would never commit such an action. It was the Israelis, he maintained.

"I know for sure that the people who did this were Al Qaeda guys," said Soufan. He took seven photographs out of the book and laid them on the table.

"How do you know?" Abu Jandal asked. "Who told you?"

"You did," said Soufan. "These *are* the hijackers. You just identified them."

Abu Jandal turned pale. He covered his face with his hands. "Give me a moment," he pleaded. Soufan walked out of the room. When he came back, he asked Abu Jandal what he thought now. "I think the Sheikh went crazy," he said. And then he told Soufan everything he knew. ♦



LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

BLUE-COLLAR GOLD

Comedy between the coasts.

BY TAD FRIEND

As midnight neared on a brisk February evening in Nashville, America's most popular comedians were celebrating at the bar of the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. They had just brought their Blue Collar Comedy Tour to 18,183 people at the Gaylord Entertainment Center, their largest audience in six years of touring, and the Gaylord's largest ever—exceeding even the night Billy Joel and Elton John came to town together. Puffing on an expensive cigar, one of the comics, Ron White, declared, "We beat that crowd to *death*."

White, a lowering Texan who wears dark suits and drinks Johnnie Walker Black onstage, wasn't exaggerating much. The four men had had their fans laughing and chugging beer and jumping to their feet to roar at the precision punch lines, such as White's idea of scheduling the execution of Scott Peterson, the convicted wife-killer, for the first morning of daylight-saving time—"Just so I could walk into the cell and go, 'Well, looks like you've got about another hour, Scott. . . . Nope, spring forward, asshole!' " Jeff Foxworthy, a courteous and soft-spoken man of forty-seven, earned a shout for his take on couture: "If your mother still drives you to school, you ain't no gangster—pull your pants up!" And Larry the Cable Guy, the comedian Dan Whitney's alter ego—an endearing rube who wears a cap with a Confederate emblem and flavors his cracker twang with "dadgum," "underbritches," and "cellularized telephones"—drew hoots when he said, "I'd rather go hunting with Dick Cheney than go swimming with Ted Kennedy any day," and a further storm of applause when he remarked, apropos of nothing in particular, "Waffle House—that's what I like!"

At the bar, the fourth Blue Collar comic, Bill Engvall, was saying, "Wasn't tonight amazing, like chill bumps onstage?" Engvall, a spaniel-eyed Texan who had got big laughs earlier when he acted out trying to hold back a fart while receiving a massage, is the group's enthusiast. He added, "We should keep going—do ten of these a year!" The following month's shows in Washington, D.C., which were to be filmed for a concert movie—the group's third—would be their last; the comedians are now so successful that it is nearly impossible to get them all together. "I love you guys like my family, we are—"

"We are all fucking huge as our own fucking entities," White said. "I sold fifty thousand dollars' worth of Ron White *air freshener* in the last three months. But together—"

"Together," Foxworthy said, "there's a magic."

Everyone nodded. "We might not be the Beatles," White declared, "but we are at least the Kinks!"

The first two Blue Collar concert movies became, in turn, the highest-rated films ever shown on Comedy Central. Larry the Cable Guy (who was already on his tour bus, heading for a gig in Tampa) has been the country's top touring comedian for the past two and a half years, earning about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a night, with Ron White not far behind. And Jeff Foxworthy, the star of a short-lived mid-nineties sitcom called "The Jeff Foxworthy Show," has, over the course of his career, sold a record fifteen million comedy albums, more than twice as many as Steve Martin and Richard Pryor combined.

The genius of Foxworthy's trademark "You might be a redneck if . . ." setup, which defines rednecks by their "glorious lack of sophistication," lies not in the punch lines ("If your working television sits on top of your non-working television") but in his observation that "most of us are guilty of it. And, if you're not guilty of it, you do have relatives that are." This elegant straddle encourages people to laugh without shame, knowing that they are not alone in their relaxed-fit cultural tastes.

At the bar, Bill Engvall observed, "I went to a 7-Eleven recently and there were our four Blue Collar-guys talking dolls. I told the guy, 'Hey, that's my doll! That's me!' And he said, 'Are you going to buy it?' " As everyone laughed, Engvall shook his head in amazement at his unlikely career. The Blue Collar comics come from small towns and farms, and each attributes much of his success to one person: the tour's impresario, J. P. Williams, who grew up in Morgantown, West Virginia, but works in Los Angeles, in the heart of what Larry the Cable Guy calls "all them rich, white, uptight, Hollywood, tofu-fartin' fairies." Williams is often absent, working the phones in L.A.; the comedians take his wisdom and counsel on faith. Engvall later told me, "I was headed for divorce and alcoholism when J.P. became my manager—he resurrected me."

Hollywood may cherish an underdog story, but the success of Blue Collar makes the town a little squeamish. "People love to fight the system in Hollywood, but fighting the system *is* the system here," Marty Bowen, a well-known agent who recently became a producer, says. "Truly fighting it by being a Republican is like wearing a scarlet 'R' on your Armani suit. And being religious is worse—'The Passion of the Christ' made six hundred million dollars, but people here saw it as an anomaly. They were frightened of it." If entertainment executives dwelled at length on the Blue Collar phenomenon, they might be forced to ponder why so many Americans watch broad sitcoms like "Two and a Half Men." They might even have to confront the idea that there are indeed two Americas and that

J. P. Williams (left) with Larry the Cable Guy. Their success makes Hollywood a little squeamish. Photograph by Evan Hurd.

theirs—the isolate island states of Manhattan and Hollywood—is wildly out of step with the rest of the country.

"When I was getting started," Jeff Foxworthy was saying, "club managers in New York told me, 'Jeff, lose the accent' "—his distinctive Georgia drawl. "And I was, like, 'Why is an accent that one quarter of the people in this country have a liability?' People in New York think we're booger-eatin' morons, but that's just wrong. What we are—the people you find once you get fifteen minutes outside the major metropolitan areas—is people who have less money and are less focussed on status, who are just trying to survive. We are the ones who get up and go to work, get up and go to church, get up and go to war." After a moment, Foxworthy said, "I did an album that went platinum in, like, three weeks"—the 1995 release "Games Rednecks Play"—"and everyone said it was going to win the Grammy for best comedy album. It wasn't just J.P., who believes in me more than I believe in me—it was *everyone*. So J.P. and I had plans to meet for a celebration dinner after the awards, at the Palm"—the Los Angeles steak house. "And they gave it to a *bootlegged* album of Jonathan Winters's answering-machine messages that he didn't even want out there. I grabbed my wife by the hand and we left and went to the Palm and they weren't even open yet, but I was banging on the door. When J.P. arrived, I was drunk, for the last time in my life, and I was hollering, 'I wanted to win a Gra-a-a-mmy.' " Foxworthy laughed, and fell silent.

ANY OLD KIND OF AUNT

She was the most ordinary aunt,
her saltbox choked with a hundred plants,

as if an overgrown garden had forced its way inside.
Dressed in white, like some antique bride,

she spent hours watering that jungle paradise.
It was, perhaps, her most obvious vice.

What was that ruined velvety gloom
that rose in the corner of the sewing room—

the black-frocked ghost of Henry James's vastation,
or just the shadow of an old indigestion?

Her floors were painted a cruel shade of lead.
The kitchen belonged in the Smithsonian, my father said.

In one corner hunkered Ben Franklin's original stove.
A flock of iron pans hung precariously above,

Like the wild headdress of an African queen.
Afternoons in her rocker, cleaning her runner beans,

my aunt glared at the oven's stiff black door
that stared with its isinglass eye, like a grand inquisitor.

The only history in her family, like a dirty sock,
was a threadbare connection to Plymouth Rock

and, in her parlor, Daniel Webster's couch
squatting beneath bay windows in a fetal crouch.

Those stifling Fourths, past her rusting cars,
our sparklers cast down incandescent stars.

—*William Logan*

J.P. Williams had planned to fly to Nashville for this post-performance celebration, at least, but at the last minute he stayed at his desk in Los Angeles. He made the decision partly because he worries, ever since he became a father, that flying invites crashing; partly because palavering with agents backstage makes him feel hollowed out; and partly because he was in the midst of shepherding Dan Whitney's début film, "Larry the Cable Guy: Health Inspector," to its release, on March 24th—and he was essentially betting his company on its success.

The first rule of producing a film in Hollywood is never, ever invest your own money. Williams, who is forty-one and, at six feet two, a burly two hundred and fifty pounds, doesn't believe much in other people's rules. He had put up four million dollars to make "Health Inspector." "I advised J.P. against doing this," Eric Gold, a partner at Mosaic Media Group, who manages such stars as Jim Carrey, Chris Rock, and Vince Vaughn, told me. "But J.P.'s got big, big brass balls. He has the risk-taking gene that David Geffen has, that Harvey Weinstein has, that Rupert Murdoch has."

In the film, Larry plays a bumptious restaurant inspector who alarms the swells. Williams envisioned the movie as a knockoff of Jim Carrey's antic 1994 hit "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective," but "Health Inspector" is much cruder. At a test screening in November, where the film scored very well with young men, the research report noted that the audience's favorite moments included "Larry going poo in Jane's bathroom" and "Donny the retard." When I asked Jon Feltheimer, the C.E.O. of Lionsgate, which would be distributing the film, if there were going to be any previews for critics, he said, "God, I hope not."

The second rule of producing is to let the studio, which is going to screw you on the accounting anyway, pick up the cost of prints and advertising; the average P. & A. for a studio film runs to about forty million dollars. But Paramount,

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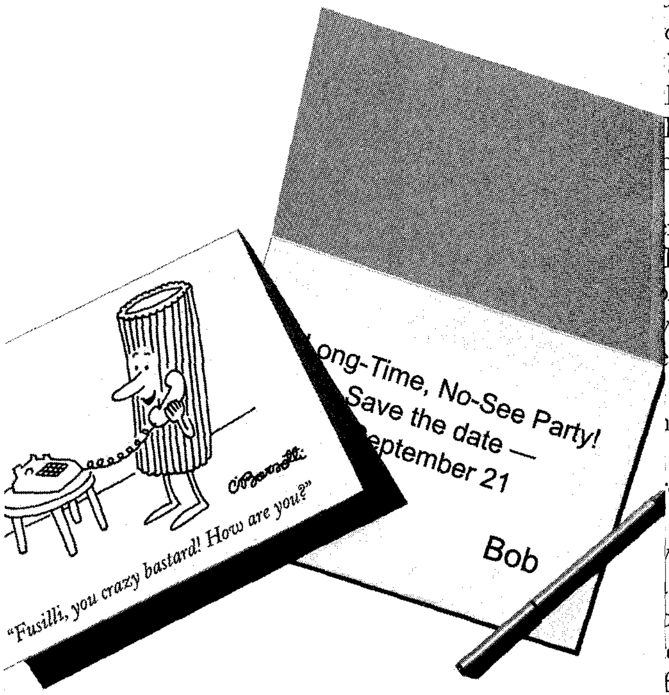
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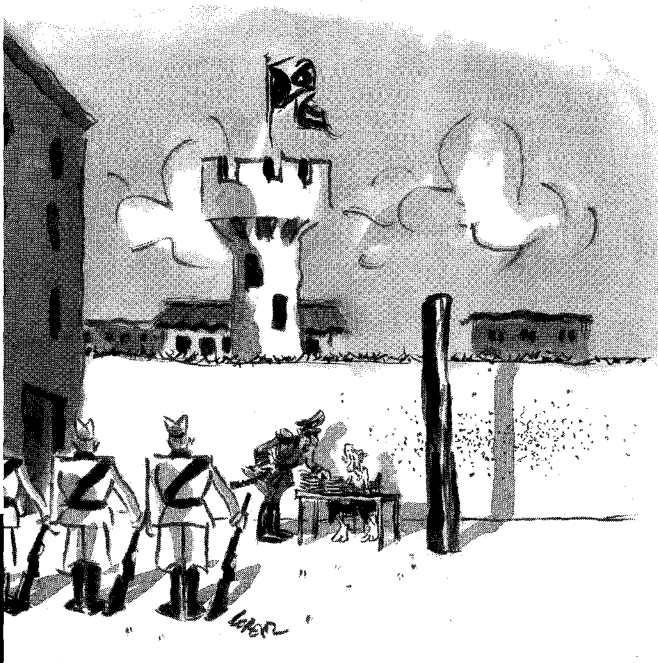
y, as it turned out—
that Warner Records planned to withhold royalties on all of his clients' records until its five-million-dollar pledge had been redeemed. Williams, speaking to his business manager and one of his lawyers, bellowed into his headset, "It's pure unadulterated greed—*I have not taken their money!* Fucking warmongers! Supposed to be my family!" After hanging up, Williams glanced over at Alan Blomquist, his producing partner on Parallel's film projects, who was sitting in a director's chair by the door, enjoying the show. "People wake up in the morning figuring out how to fuck you, J.P.," Blomquist said.

"They do! People out here do." Like a Big 10 football coach, Williams finds paranoia and rage not merely warranted by circumstance but motivational. At one point in 1995, when "The Jeff Foxworthy Show" was slowly expiring on ABC—the network had unaccountably turned Foxworthy into both an Indiana resident and the show's straight man—Williams felt that Lloyd Braun, the president of the studio producing the show, was not exerting himself to change the show's undesirable time slot. During a conference call, he screamed at Braun, "I hope you and your family die of ass cancer!" (Braun says that he doesn't recall the incident.) Now, managing to seem sheepish yet unrepentant, Williams says, "I got to realize, over time, that people pay more attention to you when you're not a screamer. But I can't say that I regret it. I try to be above five



need to be signed, but the pink ones only require initials."

on a scale of one to ten as a human being, every day, and I don't always succeed."

By Hollywood standards, Williams has succeeded. He drives a black Bentley and wears a gold Cartier watch; he has a Cape Cod-style house in Pacific Palisades; his bathroom contains sixty bottles of cologne and his cellar fifteen hundred bottles of wine. A masseuse comes to the house and a manicurist comes to the office, and he just took up yoga ("not to look pretty, but so I can smoke and have a cocktail"). But though Williams has largely put his straitened upbringing behind him—including instructing his wife never to buy or manufacture any food staple from his childhood, such as ice milk, cottage cheese, mayonnaise, Miracle Whip, casseroles, canned tuna, or fish sticks, all of whose aromas make him physically ill—he remains an outsider in one vital respect. He is not about lunch, idle schmooze, or hugging it out. Recalling how his former lawyer used to swear, "I'd take a bullet for you, J.P.," he shakes his head and remarks, "How many bullets you see flying around here in Beverly Hills?" After a moment, he adds, "There's really nobody in this town I want in my life."

At the hotel bar in Nashville, Jeff Foxworthy was talking about turning in. He had an early-morning flight home to Atlanta and then another one to Park City, Utah, to join his wife, Gregg, and their two children on vacation. Ron White offered to take him to Atlanta in his leased jet and then, as it got later, to fly him directly to Park City. ("I was *drunk*," White acknowledged afterward.) "The Hawker is waiting at the airport," White said, coaxingly.

Foxworthy cracked up. "I knew you when you used to dig through the couch cushions to find money," he said, "and now 'the Hawker is waiting'?"

"Hey, your house has everything but a gift shop, my friend," Bill Engvall said. "Larry said he got a T-shirt on the way out." Everyone laughed, and Foxworthy had the grace to hang his head.

Foxworthy, who attends a Bible-study class in the back of a barbecue joint and says that he would still rather eat at a Chick-fil-A than almost anywhere else, told me later, "I said to Ron that night at the bar, 'You know what's going to be a turning point for you, is when you realize that stuff doesn't make you happy.' Because Ron is redneck rich. And money can break the connection with the audience."

White says, unapologetically, "I live in a mansion and I drive a Bentley and I play golf every day. I think people are cheering for guys like me."

The Blue Collar tour is aimed at guys like White, give or take a Bentley: the country-music demographic, the world of the bait shop and the gun rack, the honky-tonk and the big-box store. The tour's inspiration was a group of black comedians, including the rising talent Bernie Mac, who in 1997 went on the road as "The Kings of Comedy." Their tour grossed thirty-seven million dollars in two years, and a concert movie, filmed by Spike Lee in 2000, took in an additional thirty-eight million. When Jeff Foxworthy saw an article about the Kings' appeal to hip urbanites, he told Williams, "That's leaving a *lot* of people out." So Williams, with Foxworthy's help, assembled the Blue Collar tour. It premièred in Omaha in January, 2000, and sold seventy-five hundred tickets the first night. The comedians worked together forty times a year for the next few years, selling out in unexpected places such as Minneapolis, Detroit, and Chicago because among them they touched on every variety of the Caucasian experience. "Larry's demo is Foghat and titties," Barry Gordon, an executive at Image Entertainment, which has distributed some of Williams's clients' one-man-special DVDs, says. "Bill is the Everyman next door, Jeff is the family guy, and Ron is Bubba with a country-club membership."

The tour's masterstroke was its title. Williams explains, " 'Blue collar' is everywhere, and resonates of hard work, of mines and mills. It has more universal appeal than 'redneck,' which is more Southern, more hillbilly, more negative." Tom Griswold, who co-hosts the popular syndicated radio show "Bob & Tom," says, "Blue Collar is almost the wrong name—but by God is it the perfect name. Yet, if you miss the Southern element of it, the Nascar element, you're missing a lot."

Foxworthy, Engvall, and White are unhurried storytellers in the Southern tradition of Andy Griffith and Lewis Grizzard; Whitney, who grew up in Nebraska, acknowledges that he's always surprised at just how Southern his Larry voice gets to sounding. (You hear it in the Pixar film "Cars," where he is the voice of the tow truck.) Yet the tour courts the South less as a geographic region than as a state of mind, one animated by a complex mixture of grievance and self-satisfaction that harks back to the Civil War. Though comedy traditionally emerges from oppressed minorities, Blue Collar appeals to a majority that nonetheless feels oppressed; it stirs up its fans'

Wm Hamilton

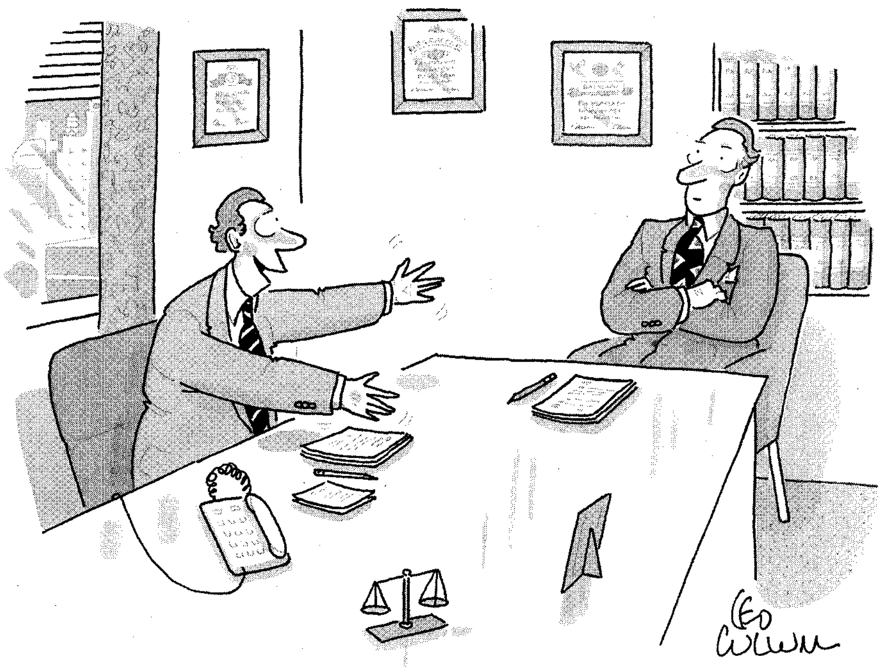
"I hear she's run off to live someplace that doesn't even have publicity."

belief that their levelheaded views are being ignored by the élite.

A comedian named Craig Hawksley, who was part of the tour for three months and who has written jokes for Bill Engvall and Ron White, observes, “The Blue Collar audience isn’t sitting on a porch eating corn. They’re actually yuppies who live in Atlanta. But they have a yearning for a simple time in a world that’s gone complicated. Anything about the troops and the flag or how much you love your wife will get big applause. It’s white hats and black hats, real basic, conservative stuff. ‘I’m not against gay people, but I don’t want them standing behind me’—it’ll bring the house down.”

For all their chestiness, though, the Blue Collar comedians are surprisingly uxorious. (The exception being Ron White, in his dick-joke-filled solo routines, which he tones down for his ensemble work.) And, while the henpecked American male has been a figure of fun since the days of W. C. Fields, Blue Collar takes him a step further, suggesting that women won the battle of the sexes because men fled the field. Jeff Foxworthy has a “you’re either gay—or married” routine (“If you’re a man and you’ve been antique shopping during a big football game, you’re either gay—or married”) that yokes both conditions under the heading of sissification. And Larry the Cable Guy recounts how his girlfriend asked him to shave his private area: “I’m, like, ‘I ain’t doing none of that kind of garbage, I ain’t one of them’ ”—he makes a limp-wristed gesture. After a pause, he continues, “So I’m in there shaving my private area . . .”

Blue Collar comedy feels homey and familiar because it lacks sexual aggression. In the film “The Original Kings of Comedy,” Bernie Mac reports that when his wife asked him to do something special in bed he replied—with exaggerated menace—“Bust your motherfuckin’ head up, is what the fuck I’m going to do.” In Bill Engvall’s routine, when his wife asks him the same thing he responds with a look of long-lived bewilderment.



“‘Is it right? . . . Is it fair?’ Get a grip, Carlton—we’re a law firm!”

In late February, with his financing in place, J. P. Williams drove over to Lionsgate, in Santa Monica, for a meeting to discuss how many screens “Health Inspector” should be released on. Half an hour later, he reappeared at his own office: “I drove around their fucking garage for fifteen minutes, and there wasn’t a fucking parking spot, so I left.”

When Alan Blomquist returned from the studio to report on the meeting, Williams told him, “You kind of disappointed me today. I wish you’d said, ‘Guys, until you get parking, we can’t have a meeting here.’ ” Blomquist, who had not told Lionsgate about Williams’s tantrum, nodded understandingly. The men’s partnership seems to work because Blomquist, who is also heavy (Williams refers to the pair as “two tons of fun”), isn’t easily upset. He was a line producer on such films as “Chocolat” and “The Cider House Rules” until he met Williams and decided that he could make more money and have more creative control trying to fashion the Blue Collar comedians into movie stars. Blomquist’s first project, from his own idea, was “Health Inspector.” “Delta Farce,” a six-million-dollar film starring Larry the Cable Guy and Bill Engvall which Blomquist describes as “ ‘Stripes’ meets ‘Three Amigos,’ ” began filming in Los Angeles three weeks ago. Parallel’s screenwriters often trace these template films like a sewing pattern; “We’re making Levittown, not the Chrysler Building,” Blomquist says.

Williams started generating his own films after a series of discouraging experiences with the studios. After being turned down by ten of them, he finally persuaded Warner Bros. to release “Blue Collar Comedy Tour: The Movie,” in 2003. But the studio didn’t push the film, and it took in barely six hundred thousand dollars in theatres (before grossing more than thirty-eight million dollars on DVD). Studio executives not only didn’t see Williams’s stars as leading men; they acted as if they were doing him a favor to suggest that they audition for small roles—the kind, as Williams puts it, “where you get twelve goober lines as a truck driver for garbage money.” It wasn’t just that, on the evidence of “The Jeff Foxworthy Show” and “Blue Collar TV” (a sketch show that ran on the WB in 2004 and 2005), his comedians hadn’t shown any particular acting chops. The real problem was cultural.

“Country and Blue Collar is where the money is,” Bernie Brillstein, who conceived the television show “Hee Haw,” which ran for twenty-four years, and who is a founding partner of the management company Brillstein-Grey, says. “But people here act like you’re not even in show business.” Studios see themselves as the pinnacle of America’s entertainment pyramid, a cut above television, two cuts above music, and six cuts above touring Blue Collar comedians and mimes. This self-satisfaction is premised on the conviction that every entertainer wants to be a movie star. (Certainly, Dan Whitney does: backstage in Nashville, he listened to the promotional plans for "Health Inspector" and then flung his arms around me and said, "I can't believe I have a movie coming out!" We had just met.) And it is further premised on its executives' belief that with them reposes a sacred public trust: to construct soul-searing, Oscar-worthy tableaux that lay bare the human condition. (The studios also know that if soul-searing films were their actual stock-in-trade they would long since have gone out of business. As Edward Jay Epstein observes in his book "The Big Picture," Sony Pictures, in the nineteen-nineties, made more than two-thirds of its money licensing television shows abroad.)

The problem with the Blue Collar comedians was that they carried no fig leaf of soul-searing anything. Because few in Hollywood had bothered to see the comedians live, no one, except J. P. Williams, could claim that they were a project spurred by genuine passion. Thomas Lesinski, the president of digital entertainment at Paramount, which distributed the second Blue Collar concert DVD and began distributing the third last week, explains, "It's so unsexy, so low-end hillbilly shit—but it makes so much money!"

A week after the parking-garage incident, Williams looked at Lionsgate's advertising plan for "Health Inspector." He had grown to admire the studio's scrappiness, but when he saw that ads had been scheduled not on "Bob & Tom," the country's largest syndicated morning radio show, but on "John Boy & Billy," the second-largest, he had Blomquist call to complain. Erika Schimik, a Lionsgate marketing executive, called back, and Blomquist put her on speakerphone.

"So, with 'Bob & Tom,' our media company felt it wasn't cost-efficient," Schimik said. "They're nowhere stations, bad signals."

Blomquist murmured to Williams, "That's code for too expensive."

"We *have* to use them," Williams said. "They launched Blue Collar 1 and 2, we're depending on them for Blue Collar 3—and they're way bigger than 'John Boy & Billy.' They reach five million listeners in a hundred and fifty markets—they're our equivalent of television."

"I am no expert," Schimik said, and Williams made a "Really?" face at Blomquist. "So this is why we look to you guys, for expertise. Message heard, loud and clear: we're going to reach Larry's core, in the South."

"The core is *not* the South, as we keep saying," Blomquist said.

"Larry is far more classic rock than country," Williams said, in a rising tone.

When Schimik explained, "That's why we're buying Philadelphia," Williams waved his hands at Blomquist and began to mutter, "Pick it up, pick it up—her voice—pick it up, Alan!"

As Blomquist lifted the handset, Williams began to rummage around the office until he found a copy of a DVD of old standup routines, "Redneck Comedy Roundup," which Lionsgate released last year. "There—that's everything I hate!" he said, pointing out how his comedians had been positioned in a broken-down pickup decked with bull's horns. "Hello, 'Dukes of Hazzard'! No matter how many times people say they get your vision, they don't! I'm still the ugly broad at the end of the bar."

One night when John Patrick Williams was six, his father, Jack, who sold and installed floor coverings for Tile Town, a small company started by Williams's grandfather, was killed when his car veered and rolled down a hill. "He was wearing his seat belt," Williams recalls, and laughs. "I don't know why I'm laughing—all I know is my grandfather ripped out all the seat belts in the car after that." Williams, who heard his mother crying herself to sleep every night for three years, reassured himself by maintaining that his father wasn't dead: he had just moved to California.

"J.P. had to become the father figure at an early age," Williams's wife, Debbie, says. "But being raised by women"—Williams was sandwiched between two sisters—"he has a lot of female traits. He loves to shop, he loves to chat, and he's very sensitive."

Williams's mother, Sis, says that her son always compared their circumstances to those of their neighbors, and that he felt it keenly when the family began to receive Social Security payments. "J.P. would never stop nagging you to get what he wanted, like a new pair of tennis shoes, but there wasn't money for it," she recalls. "So he always said, 'I'm not going to be poor.'" An indifferent student, Williams moved to Manhattan after high school, in 1983, to work for his uncle Robert, who ran a talent agency called Spotlight. Robert Williams was a figure of some notoriety in the family—Jack Williams had always ridiculed his younger brother's fur coats—but J.P. saw a kindred spirit. "If there was going to be carpet laid on the floor," Robert Williams says, "J.P. and I were absolutely going to be with you to have a hamburger when it was done."

Standup comedy boomed during the nineteen-eighties, and Spotlight, which represented everyone from Jerry Seinfeld to Jay Leno to Damon Wayans, was at the center of the explosion. Williams roamed the comedy clubs in the uniform of the moment: a mullet, parachute pants, and a feathered earring. In 1988, at Catch a Rising Star, he met the then unknown Foxworthy. Foxworthy wanted a "bulldog" to represent him, and in Williams—who loudly let it be known that no one else at Spotlight was to take calls on the comic's behalf—he acquired the agency's pit bull. During one conference call, Williams became so enraged by a credit-hogging television agent that he flung his Rolodex at the wall (hitting a junior agent), then hurtled over his desk and began throttling the offender. "If you can jump your desk, you ought to be allowed to strangle somebody," he explains.

During the early nineties, as comedy faltered, Robert Williams began to cover some of his agency's expenses with money it was holding for its clients, including twenty-five thousand dollars owed to Foxworthy. In December, 1991, with Spotlight about to enter bankruptcy, J. P. Williams started Parallel Entertainment in Los Angeles with another former Spotlight agent named Debbie Shaler, whom he would soon marry. Their seed money was twenty thousand dollars that Jeff Foxworthy had loaned his new manager—

half of the comedian's newly depleted life savings.

Within three years, Foxworthy was playing concert halls. "The more I got to know J.P. and the way he handled Jeff," Mike Smardak, Williams's regular concert promoter, says, "the more I saw the plan leading to television, to Jeff's autobiography"—Foxworthy would go on to sell more than six million books on a variety of topics—"to putting comedy to music and playing the songs on CMT"—Country Music Television—"to building the brand in every direction. J.P. and Jeff were like a boxer who methodically takes his opponent down through a series of body blows."

Williams's core principles might be summarized as follows:

Clean it up. When Williams signed Bill Engvall, in 1995, Engvall recalls, "J.P. told me, 'Stop drinking tequila onstage—it's unprofessional.' He was absolutely right." Williams also told him, "Don't look like a hillbilly, unless you're doing it on purpose, like Larry."

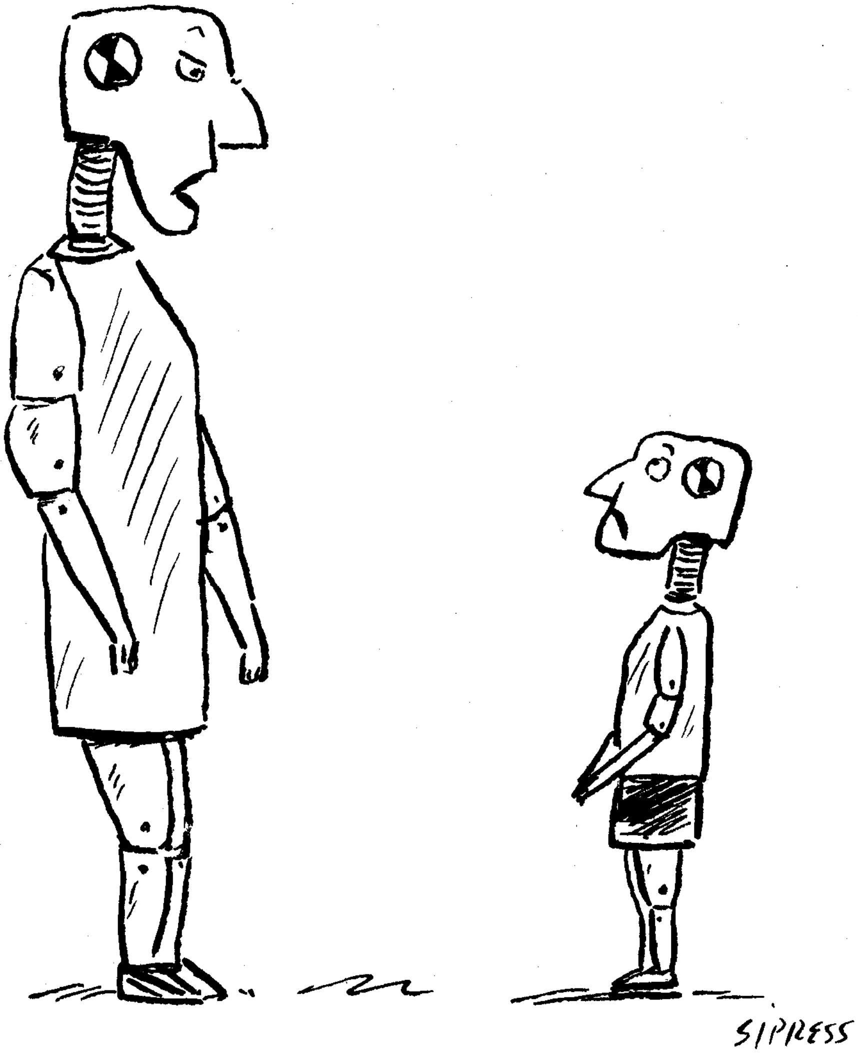
Then scrub it again. Williams typically grooms the profanity from his acts; Ron White's resistance to being toned down is one reason that he is managed by someone else. Networks such as Comedy Central prefer clean comedy, because it attracts an older audience, which helps meet the Beer Institute's "70-30" standard: brewing companies will advertise on a cable show only if seventy per cent of its audience is over twenty-one. Another powerful reason not to work blue is that Wal-Mart won't sell products with a parental-advisory sticker—and Wal-Mart constitutes forty-five per cent of Williams's CD and DVD business. "It's not about censoring the artist," Williams says. "The whole art of comedy is doing a pussy joke without ever using the word 'pussy.' "

Work the hook. The Blue Collar comedians' catchphrases adorn more than a hundred articles of authorized merchandise, from Bill Engvall's "Here's Your Sign" license plates and Jeff Foxworthy's "You Might Be a Redneck" greeting cards and slot machines to Larry's "Git-R-Done" thong underwear. "Git-R-Done," a kind of updated "Keep on truckin'," is the most profitable phrase in comedy; it is the title of Larry's book and his DVD, and it graces ring tones and cell-phone wallpaper and camo hats and almost anything you can imagine. Last year, the comedian sold more than seven million dollars' worth of novelty merchandise in convenience stores alone.

Williams knows that some of his colleagues dismiss his success. "J. P. Williams is not a genius," as one leading talent agent puts it. "He's just tapped into this huge audience of one hundred thousand people filling the Astrodome to see Billy Graham, and none of us Jews here know who the fuck they are or what the fuck they're thinking."

Williams takes particular pride in confounding expectations, and though he finds it tactically useful to be underestimated, he erupts at slights to his comedians—or to his family. Jack, the Williamses' five-year-old son, was born prematurely and spent forty days in intensive care; his motor skills still lag behind those of his classmates. This Valentine's Day, J.P. and Debbie met with officials at Jack's school; they wanted their son to repeat preschool, and the school was suggesting that Jack go elsewhere. "They're assuming he's still going to be behind in a year," Williams said, pacing in his office afterward. "Well, what about the possibility he surprises you, and it's a spectacular story! You look at this kid today, and he's got a great sense of humor and he's very perceptive and he can hear shit like a friggin' dog, and—so he can't hold a pencil correctly. He's already achieved more than anyone thought would be possible when he was in a coma for thirteen days and full of tubes. Isn't that the story?"

As Williams prospered, his mother always reminded him, "Don't forget where you came from," and "Money does not make the man." Well before he began to earn seven figures a year, he put his younger sister, Andrea, through college, and provided the down payment for her house. (She went on to co-found



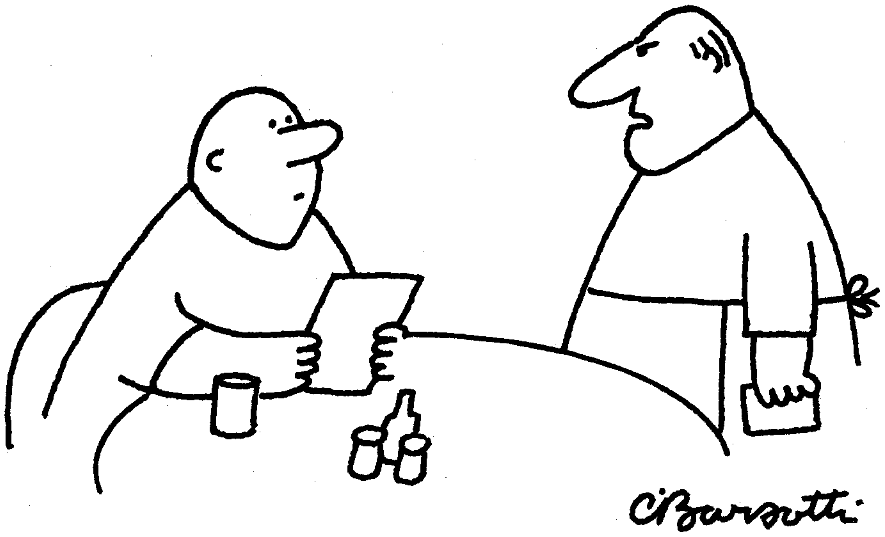
"You were an accident."

a business that specializes in tutoring autistic children.) Though he is a churchgoing Catholic, Williams practices a workaday version of the evangelical "prosperity gospel," which holds that those who give shall receive in untold multiples. Valet parkers and homeless people are the beneficiaries of his fifty- and hundred-dollar bills, and Williams bought Cartier watches for fifteen of the cast and crew of "Health Inspector." Numerous friends remember occasions when Williams, while hosting drinks or dinner in a restaurant, would pause before writing in the tip and ask his waiter, "How much do you think you're worth?" Whatever the answer, usually a low amount, Williams would tip five hundred or a thousand or even two thousand dollars, signing with a flourish as he offered an admonition: "Never sell yourself short."

Williams follows his own rule in negotiations: he names his price and sticks to it. Once the basic fee is established, he relishes buffaloing the industry's highly credentialled lawyers and M.B.A.s with further demands, often issued in abrupt, unpunctuated, creatively spelled e-mails. He always preserves his clients' DVD rights, and likes to build escape hatches into contracts so that he's not committed to a studio or a record company or a network if it doesn't perform for him. He is willing to take a lesser advance in exchange, because he believes that his artists' royalties will ultimately exceed the forgone advance. "I brought up the idea of an option on J.P.'s next film," Jon Feltheimer, of Lionsgate, told me, "but I didn't have a whole lot of leverage on that, not having put up any money for this one."

Colonel Tom Parker, Elvis Presley's longtime manager, used to say, "How much does it cost if it's free?"—meaning that artists aren't valued unless they're expensive. Williams's hunger seems to arise, in part, from an anxiety about how his business partners actually regard his clients; in lieu of love, he takes cash. After Comedy Central bought the first Blue Collar concert film for a million dollars and the second for two million, Williams raised the price on the third, which débuted on the network a few weeks ago, to four million. "I don't know that the level of shifting sands and moving goalposts is any more than you get from an Armani-clad agent on Wilshire Boulevard," David Bernath, the network's senior vice-president of programming, says. "It's just that those guys do it with handshakes and politeness, and J.P. is in your face: 'I want more.' If you get great ratings, no matter how much you paid, J.P. will feel you bested him—he's got the victim complex."

Doug Herzog, the president of Comedy Central, admits that the popularity of Blue Collar material on his network "totally blindsided me. We thought our audience just wanted 'edgy' or 'outrageous' comedy—Jon Stewart, Dave Chappelle, 'South Park.' " Now Comedy Central, tired of renting Williams's slice of America, is copying him the way he copied the Kings of Comedy: the network is developing a number of Blue Collar-style shows—"The Bubbas," "The Christers," etc.—which it can own outright.



"That filet is for ladies."

The network's belated conversion has not earned it any discounts. Having sold Larry's first one-hour special to the network for two hundred thousand dollars, in 2004, Williams recently offered Comedy Central the comedian's next special, taping this November, for two million. It was a shocking figure—Ron White, who also taped a special for the network this year, was paid only seven hundred thousand. Bernath counter-offered $1.2 million, but Williams said, "It's the number." After some further back and forth, Bernath capitulated. "Mostly, it was J.P.'s obstinacy that got us to two million," Bernath says, acknowledging that the network overpaid. "Because he will walk away—he did it to Paramount."

"It's a lot," Williams says. "But I honestly think I could have got two-point-five million."

One morning, Larry the Cable Guy called Parallel's office from his tour bus in Canada, and was surprised to hear an unfamiliar voice: Williams's new personal assistant, Jessica. When Williams got on, Larry said, "An assistant now? What are you, wearing a fur coat and smoking a cigar?"

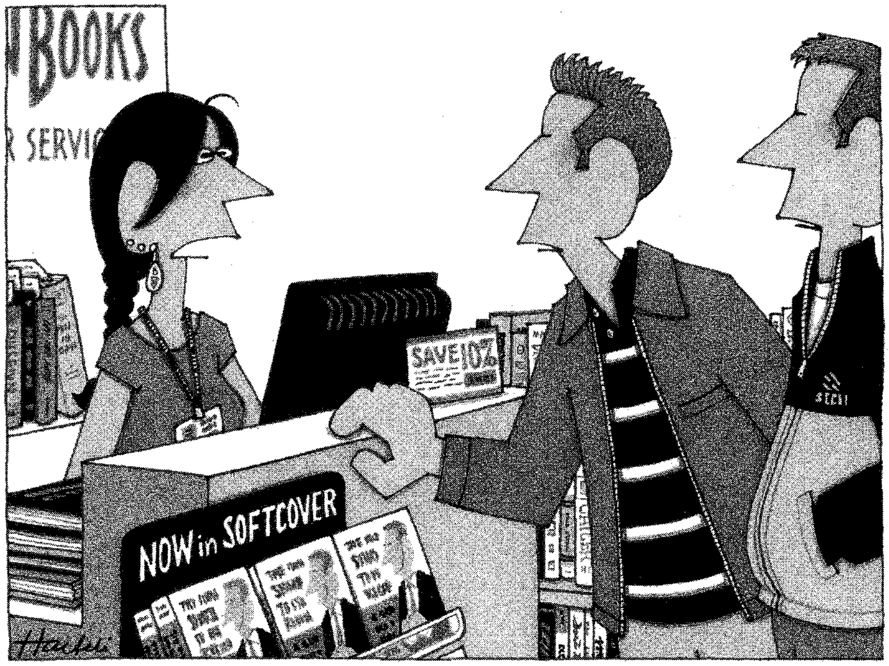
"Matter of fact I am, you big prick. Listen, did I send you that e-mail about that guy in Seattle fucking that horse? Uh-huh. Hey, so do you still feel good about your President, after—" Williams listened to Larry marshal his pro-George Bush arguments, grinning. A registered Democrat, the manager doesn't vote. "I don't really care, Larry," he said. "I just like hearing your passion."

Larry eventually brought the conversation around to a new album by a comedian named Steve Hofstetter called "The Cure for Larry the Cable Guy," whose cover shows a Larry doll hanging in a noose. "I think it's hateful," Larry told me later. "If I put out an album having Chris Rock hanging from a tree, that would be it! But since it's me, the Southern white guy, the Reagan Republican . . ."

There has been a backlash in the comedy world against the Blue Collar comedians, particularly Larry. Some of it is envy, but much of the fury seems to be directed against Larry as a proxy for all that is embodied by Bush, who gained the White House the year that the tour began. "I don't hate Larry the Cable Guy," the comedian Doug Stanhope says. "I hate the ferocious response to the character he allows the audience to believe he is. When you see a Git-R-Done hat coming at you, it's like seeing a 'Colored Only' sign. Blue-collar comedy is about the poverty of imagination and the celebration of complacency. But it just goes to show that if you serve this country wet shit on a buckled paper plate, people will line up for it in droves."

Williams, on the phone with Larry, tried to be reassuring: "It's really a tribute to how big you are. Look at the e-mail he sent around." Williams called up an e-mail from Hofstetter on his computer. "He says, 'A lot of radio, magazines, and national TV are all behind my stance against "Larry's" racism, homophobia, and promotion of general ignorance.' Then he says he's never met you or seen your concerts but that he's heard you're kind and bright and 'neither racist nor homophobic.' So what the fuck—tell me he isn't just trying to make a buck off of you."

After Larry hung up, mollified, Williams noted that Larry's "The Right to Bare Arms" album had recently lost the Grammy to Chris Rock's "Never Scared." Rock's album has sold thirty-two thousand copies; Larry's has sold more than seven hundred thousand. "Just like Jeff ten years ago," Williams said. "I understand that we're not cocktail-party conversation for the élites—I mean, I'm never going to wake up and suddenly be making 'The English Patient.' But shouldn't some part of it all be your popularity?"



"We no longer shelve gay fiction separately. It's been assimilated."

Late one afternoon, Blomquist and Williams were sitting in Williams's office, chatting. "Health Inspector" was coming out in three weeks, and Lionsgate, responding to requests from exhibitors and to positive tracking numbers, had decided to broaden the opening to seventeen hundred screens—five hundred more than the company had originally planned. Williams seemed amused and unsurprised that his faith in Larry and his movie had been ratified by the numbers. Jon Feltheimer told me that he was hoping for the film to earn six to eight million dollars in its first weekend, which would put it on track to make fifteen to twenty million at the box office. That would balance the books and enable the studio to clear a few million from the sale of the movie to television; it would also allow Parallel to make at least seven million from sales of the DVD. Yet Comedy Central had declined to buy the rights to "Health Inspector" before its release. "They think the price is going to drop, because they don't believe in it," Williams told Blomquist. Williams wanted five million, and Comedy Central had capped its offer—based on a percentage of the film's box-office receipts—at three. "But they're wrong," Williams said. "If you see something that looks like a bee, and it sounds like a bee"—"Bzzzzz!" Blomquist said—"you're going to get stung."

Alone, later, Williams reflected on his future. Much depended on the success of "Health Inspector," of course, and that would largely be determined by its opening weekend. Having spent years trying to persuade the industry to see beyond its class distinctions, Williams was hoping that the shock of undeniable, in-your-face profits would finally do the trick. "My goal is to have people open the trades that Monday and say, 'How the *fuck*? *That*?" He laughed. "If I wanted to be a smart-ass, when the movie does well I would take out an ad in the trades congratulating Paramount for letting it go." He rubbed his hands together, then added, reluctantly, "But I won't."

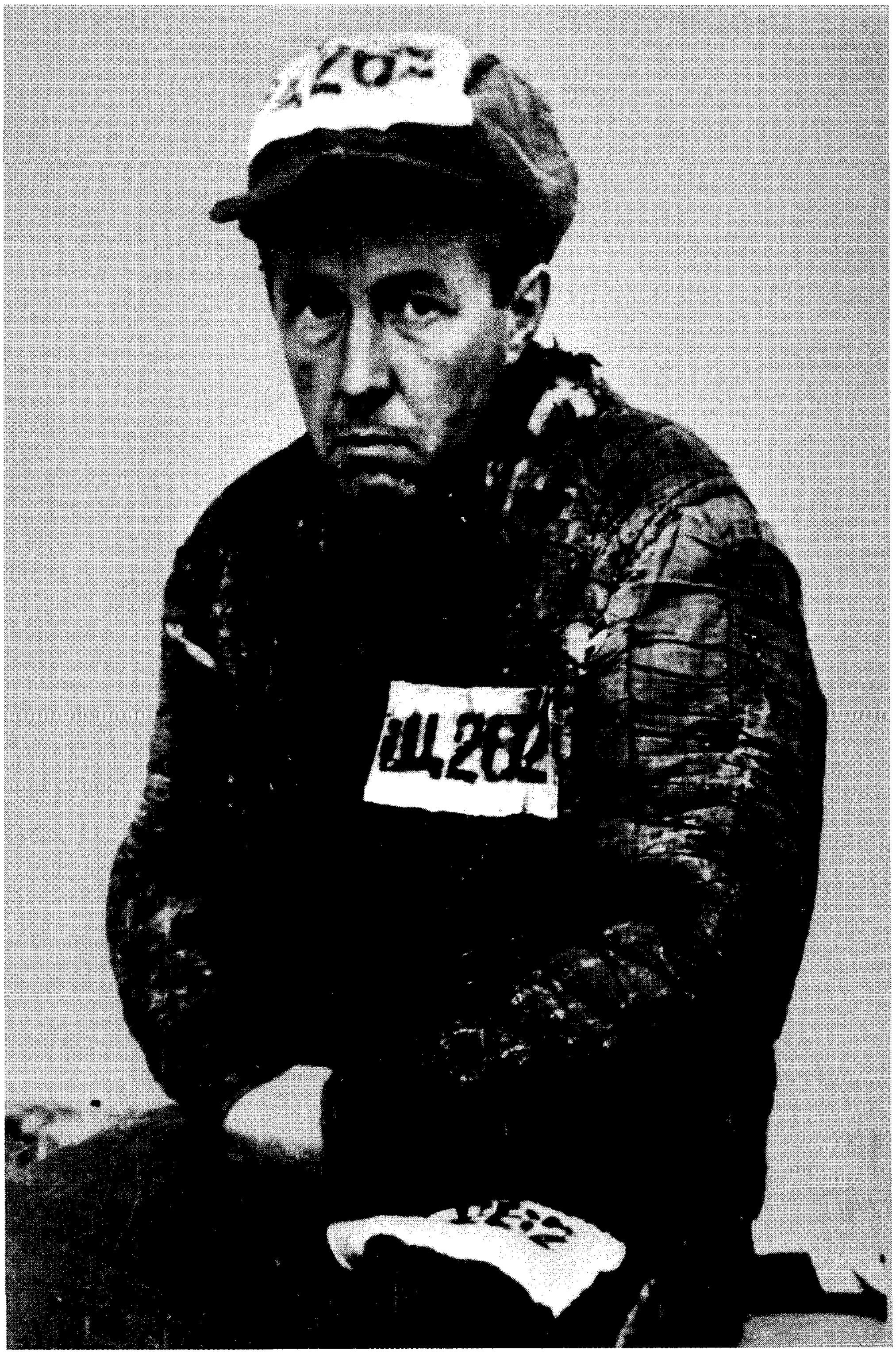
When I asked what would happen if the movie fared poorly, he glowered. "Everybody told me with the Foxworthy show in '95, 'You only get one shot on TV, and if it fails you're done,'" he replied. "Same with 'Blue Collar TV.' Same with the concert movies: nobody believed in them, then or later. And guess what? *We're still here*."

On its opening weekend, "Health Inspector" made $6.9 million—on a par with such films as "Dungeons & Dragons" and "Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday"—and it would go on to gross $15.7 million. The opening was high enough that when Comedy Central's David Bernath called that Monday, Williams declined to pick up and e-mailed him, cheerfully, "Pay me or leave me fuck you." And it was just low enough that Hollywood could continue to pretend that Williams and his stars didn't exist. ♦

FICTION

THE PHONE CALL

BY ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN



Although the complete text of Solzhenitsyn's first full-length novel, "The First Circle," has been published in Russia, the only version available in English so far is an abbreviated text that Solzhenitsyn "lightened" in the vain hope of getting it past Soviet censors. The "lightened" version opens in December, 1949, as Innokentii Volodin, a Soviet diplomat, tries to caution a doctor he knows against sharing an experimental drug with Westerners. In Solzhenitsyn's original opening, which follows in its first English translation, Volodin has learned that a Soviet spy in New York is about to be given classified information on atomic-bomb technology. An insider, no longer able to deny that he operates within a totalitarian regime, Volodin faces a moral dilemma: should he warn the U.S. Ambassador?

TORPEDO

The filigreed hands pointed to five minutes past four.

The bronze of the clock was lustreless in the dying light of a December day.

A tall window looked down on bustling Kuznetsky Most. Maintenance workers trudged doggedly to and fro, scraping up the fresh snow that was already caking and turning brown under the feet of pedestrians.

State Counsellor Grade Two Innokentii Volodin surveyed all this unseeingly, lolling against the embrasure and whistling something drawn-out and elusive. His fingertips flipped through the pages of a glossy foreign magazine, but he had no eyes for it.

Volodin State Counsellor Grade Two—the diplomatic-service equivalent of lieutenant colonel—was tall and narrow-shouldered, and wore a suit made of a silky material instead of his uniform; he looked more like a well-off young drone than an official of some importance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It was time to switch the lights on or go home, but he stayed where he was.

Four o'clock was the end not of the workday but only of its daytime segment. Everyone would now go home, have something to eat, and take a nap; then, at 10 P.M., the thousands and thousands of windows in forty-five All-Union and twenty Union-Republican ministries would light up again. A certain individual, ringed by a dozen fortress walls, could not sleep at night, and he had trained all of official Moscow to stay awake with him until three or four in the morning. Knowing the peculiar nocturnal habits of their lord and master, all sixty-odd ministers kept vigil, like schoolboys awaiting a summons from the headmaster. To fight off sleep, they would call in their deputies, and then the deputy ministers would rouse the department heads; the research officers would erect ladders and swarm over card indexes, the clerks would charge along corridors, and the stenographers would break the points of their pencils.

Today was no exception. It was Christmas Eve by the Western calendar, and all the embassies had fallen silent and stopped calling two days earlier, but the ministry would be sitting up through the night just the same.

They—the Western diplomats—had two weeks of holiday ahead of them. Trusting babes! Stupid donkeys!

The young man's nervous fingers leafed through the magazine hastily, mechanically, while hot waves of terror welled up inside him, then subsided, leaving him cold.

Innokentii flung the magazine away and began pacing the room, shuddering.

Should he call or shouldn't he? Did it have to be now? Would Thursday or Friday be too late over there?

Too late . . . There was so little time to think about it, and absolutely nobody to ask for advice!

Surely there would be no way of finding out who'd made a call from a phone booth. If he spoke only in Russian? If he didn't hang around but walked away quickly? Surely they wouldn't be able to identify a muffled voice over the telephone. It had to be a technical impossibility.

In three or four days' time he would be flying there himself. It would be more logical to wait. More sensible.

But it would be too late.

Oh, hell! His shoulders, unused to such burdens, hunched in a shiver. It would have been better if he had never found out. Better not to know.

He scooped up all the papers on his desk and carried them to the safe. His agitation grew and grew. Innokentii lowered his brow onto the dull-red painted iron of the safe and rested there with closed eyes.

Then, suddenly, as though he felt his last chance slipping away from him, without calling for a car, without so much as putting the lid back on his inkwell, Innokentii rushed for the door, locked it behind him, turned in his key to the guard at the end of the hallway, raced down the stairs, passing the usual gold-braided personages, dived into his overcoat, planted his hat on his head, and ran out into the damp twilight.

Rapid motion brought him some relief.

His low-heeled French shoes, worn fashionably without galoshes, sank into the slush.

As he passed the Vorovsky Monument in the ministry courtyard, Innokentii looked up and shuddered. The new building of the Great Lubyanka, which looked out on Furkasov Passage, suddenly acquired an added significance for him. This gray-black nine-story hulk was a battleship, and the eighteen pilasters loomed like gun turrets on its starboard side. And Innokentii's tiny craft was being helplessly sucked into its path, under the bow of the swift, heavy vessel.

Or no: he wasn't a helpless, captive canoe; he was deliberately heading toward the battleship like a torpedo!

He could hold out no longer! He turned right onto Kuznetsky Most. A taxi was about to pull away from the curb. Innokentii grabbed it, and told the driver to head quickly downhill, then turn left, under the newly lit street lamps of the Petrovka.

He still couldn't decide where to make his call from—where he could be sure that no one would be hovering impatiently, distracting him, peering through the door. But if he looked for a single phone booth in some quiet spot he would make himself more conspicuous. Wouldn't it be better to pick one in the thick of it all, as long as it had soundproof brick or stone walls? And how stupid he had been to chase around in a taxi and make the driver a witness. He dug into his pocket, hoping not to find the fifteen kopecks that he'd need

PHOTO X/DR/ARCHIVES SEUIL

Solzhenitsyn, immediately after his release from the labor camp at Ekibastuz, Kazakhstan, in the mid-nineteen-fifties.

for the call. If he didn't find them, he could obviously put it off.

At the traffic light on Okhotny Ryad, his fingers felt and drew out two fifteen-kopeck pieces simultaneously. So that was that.

This seemed to calm him down. Whether it was dangerous or not, he had no alternative.

If we live in a constant state of fear, can we remain human?

Without intending it, Innokentii now found himself riding along the Mokhovaya, past the Embassy. Fate was taking a hand. He pressed his face against the window, craning his neck, trying unsuccessfully to make out which windows were lit up.

They passed the university, and Innokentii motioned to the right. It was as though he were circling his target in order to position his torpedo correctly.

They sped up to the Arbat; Innokentii gave the driver two notes, stepped out, and crossed the square, trying to moderate his pace.

His throat and his mouth were suffering from the dryness that no drink can relieve.

By now the Arbat was all lit up. Before the Khudozhestvenny Cinema there was a long line for "The Ballerina's Romance." A faint bluish mist clouded the red "M" above the metro station. A woman with a dark southern complexion was selling little yellow flowers. The doomed man could no longer see his battleship, but his breast was bursting with desperate resolve.

Remember, though: not a word in English. Let alone French. Mustn't leave the smallest clue for the tracker dogs.

Innokentii walked on, erect and no longer hurrying. A girl eyed him as he passed.

And another one. Very pretty, too. Wish yourself well out of it!

How big the world is, and how full of opportunities! But all that's left for you is this narrow passage.

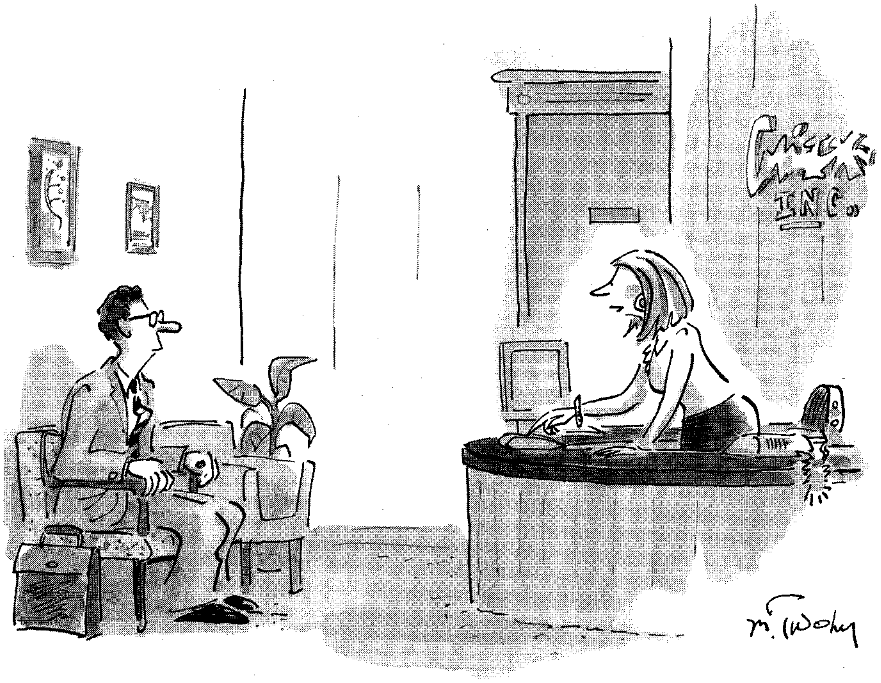
One of the wooden booths outside the station was empty, but seemed to have a broken window. Innokentii walked on, into the station.

Here the four booths set in the wall were all occupied. But in the one to the left a rough-looking character, not quite sober, was finishing his call and hanging up the receiver. He smiled at Innokentii and started to say something. Innokentii took his place in the kiosk, carefully pulled the thick-paned door closed, and held it shut with one hand; the other, still gloved, trembled as it dropped a coin into the slot and dialled a number.

After several prolonged buzzes, the receiver was lifted at the other end.

"Is that the secretariat?" Innokentii asked, trying to disguise his voice.

"Yes."



"I can check again, but Mr. Saunders usually insists on the full wait."

"Please put me through to the Ambassador immediately."

The answer came in very good Russian.

"I can't call the Ambassador. What is your business?"

"Give me the chargé, then! Or the military attaché! Please be quick!"

There was a pause for thought at the other end. Innokentii put himself in fate's hands: if the request was denied—let it go at that, don't try a second time.

"Very well, I'm connecting you with the attaché."

He heard the connection being made.

Through the thick glass he saw people passing, within inches of the row of phone booths, hurrying, pushing past one another. One person peeled off and stood impatiently waiting his turn outside Innokentii's booth.

Somebody with a thick accent and a well-fed, indolent voice spoke into the telephone: "Hallo. What do you want?"

"Is this the military attaché?" Innokentii asked brusquely.

"Yes, air attaché," the voice drawled at the other end.

What next? Screening the receiver with his hand, Innokentii spoke in a low voice but urgently. "Mr. Air Attaché! Please write this down and pass it to the Ambassador immediately."

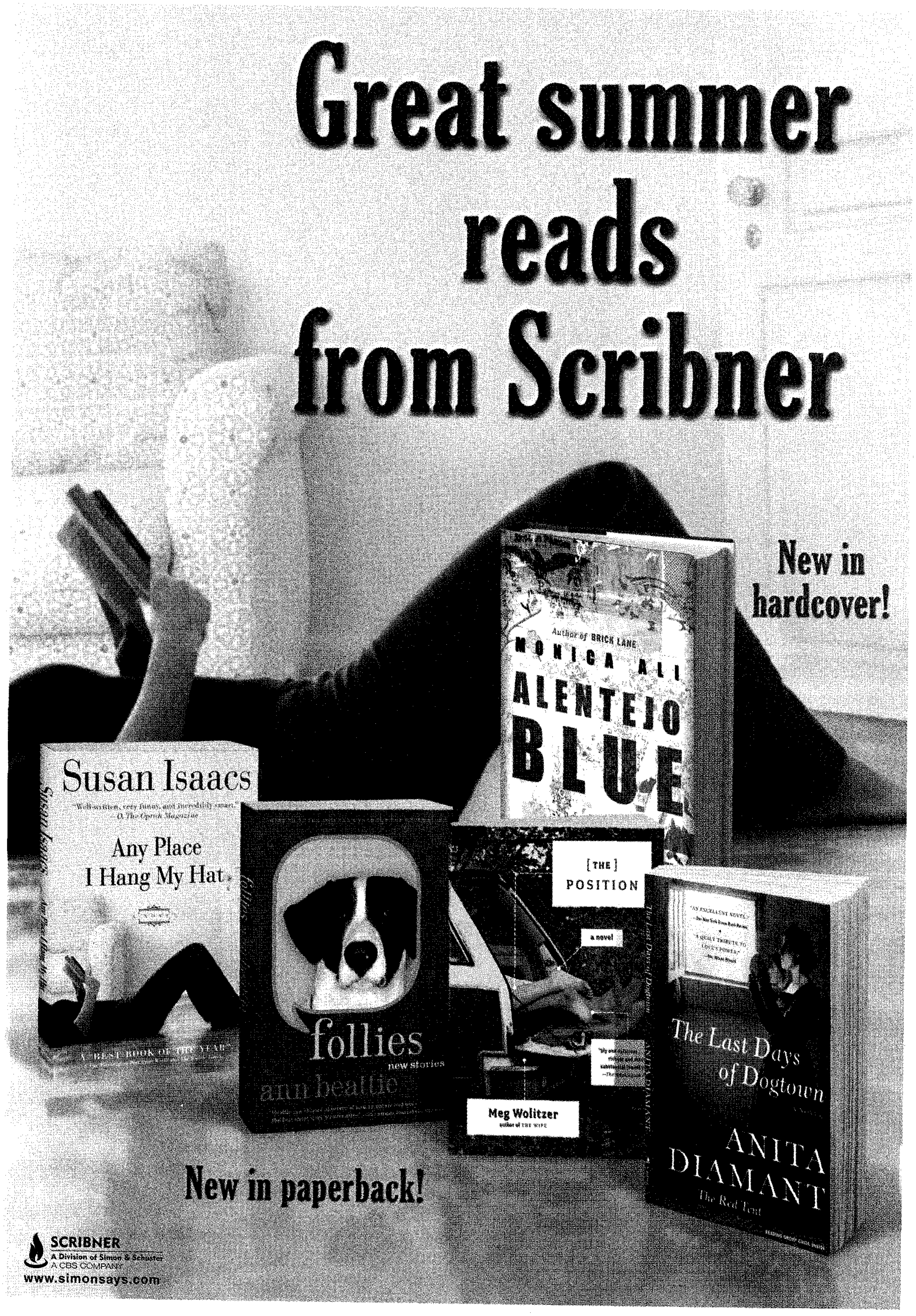
"Just a moment," the leisurely voice answered. "I'll call an interpreter."

"I can't wait!" Innokentii was seething. He had dropped his attempt to disguise his voice. "And I will not talk to any Soviet person! Do not put the receiver down! This is a life-and-death matter for your country! And not only your country! Listen! Within the next few days a Soviet agent called Georgii Koval will pick something up at a shop selling radio parts. The address is—"

"I don't quite understand," the attaché replied calmly, in halting Russian. He, of course, was sitting on a comfortable sofa, and no one was on his trail. Animated female voices could be heard in the room around him. "Call the Canadian Embassy. They have good Russian speakers there."

The phone-booth floor was burning under Innokentii's feet, and the black receiver with its heavy steel chain was melting in his hand. But a single foreign word could destroy him!

"Listen! Listen!" he cried in despair. "In a few days' time the Soviet agent



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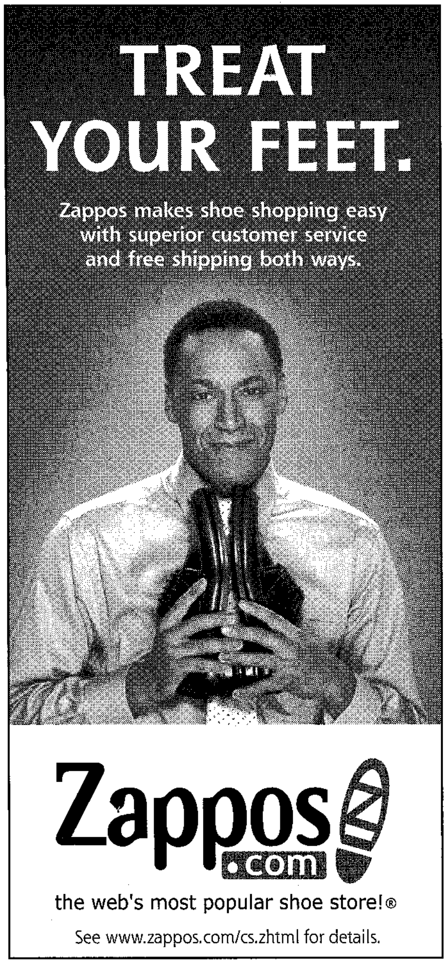

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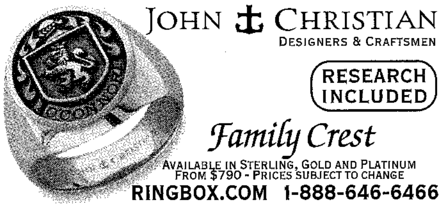

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Koval will be given important technological information about the production of the atomic bomb, at a radio shop on—"

"What? Which avenue?" The attaché sounded surprised. He paused for a moment. "Who are you, anyway? How do I know you're speaking the truth?"

"Do you know what a risk I'm taking?" Innokentii shot back. Somebody seemed to be knocking on the glass behind him. The attaché was silent. Perhaps taking a long puff on his cigarette.

"The atomic bomb?" he repeated dubiously. "But who are you? Tell me your name."

There was a muffled click and then dead silence, unbroken by rustling or buzzing.

They had been cut off.

A BLUNDER

There are establishments in which you suddenly come across a dull-red lamp over a door marked "Employees Only." Or, more currently, it may be an imposing plate-glass sign: "Strictly No Entrance to Unauthorized Persons." There may even be a grim security guard sitting at a little table and inspecting passes. As always, when confronted with the forbidden, your imagination runs away with you.

In reality, the door opens onto another unremarkable hallway, perhaps a bit cleaner. A streak of cheap red carpet, standard government issue, runs down the middle. The parquet floor has been more or less polished. Spittoons are stationed at fairly frequent intervals.

But there are no people. There is no movement out of one door and into another. And these doors are all covered with black leather, black leather distended with padding, pinned down by white studs and bearing shiny oval number plates.

Even those who work in one such room know less about what goes on in the room next door than they do about the gossip of the day on the island of Madagascar.

On the same gloomy frost-free December evening, in the building of the Moscow Central Automatic Telephone Exchange, on one of those forbidden hallways and in one of those inaccessible rooms, known to the superintendent of the building as Room 194 and to Department XI of the 6th Administration of the Ministry of State Security as Post A-1, two lieutenants were on duty. Not in uniform, however: they could enter and leave the telephone exchange with greater anonymity in civilian dress. One wall of the room was occupied by a switchboard and an acoustic apparatus—black plastic and shiny metal. A long list of instructions, on dingy paper, hung on the other.

These instructions anticipated and warned against every imaginable breach of or departure from routine in monitoring and recording calls to and from the U.S. Embassy, stipulating that two persons should be on duty at all times, one listening in continuously, never removing the headphones, with the other never leaving the room except to go to the toilet, and that the two men should alternate duties at half-hour intervals.

If you followed these instructions, mistakes would be impossible.

But such is the fatal incompatibility of officialdom's perfectionism with man's pitiful imperfection that these instructions had for once been disobeyed. Not because the men on duty were novices but because they were experienced enough to know that nothing special ever happened, least of all on the Western Christmas Eve.

One of them, the flat-nosed Lieutenant Tyukin, knew that he would be asked in his politics class the following Monday: Who are "the friends of the people" and how do they fight against the social democrats? Why did we have to break with the Mensheviks at the Second Congress, and why were we right to do so? Why did we reunite at the Fifth Congress, again acting correctly, then at the Sixth Congress again go our separate ways, yet again correctly?

Tyukin wouldn't have dreamed of starting his reading on a Saturday, when he had little hope of memorizing anything, except that after duty on Sunday he and his sister's husband intended to do some serious drinking. He would never be able to take in any of

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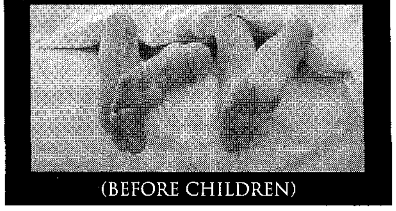
the Russian, by Harry Willetts.)

RETURN TO
B.C. DAYS



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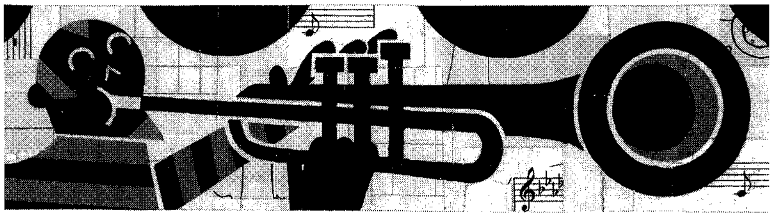


THE CURRENT CINEMA

DRESSED TO KILL

"The Devil Wears Prada."

BY DAVID DENBY

In "The Devil Wears Prada," Meryl Streep, as the invincible New York fashion editor Miranda Priestly, never raises her voice. To snarl or shout would imply that some resistance to her authority exists, and none does. In the most matter-of-fact way, Miranda has reduced her staff to a state of hyperventilating fear. At the offices of the thick fashion monthly *Runway*, the perpendicular girls in John Galliano and heels race through the corridors like cranes on point; one girl, running across the street on a meaningless errand, gets knocked down by a car. Despite these desperate efforts, Miranda insists that she's a victim of universal lethargy. Day after day, she's perplexed by the ineptitude of the staff. Lowering her chin slightly, Streep stares at the young women who work for her until their knees knock; she speaks in petulant fragments, leaving out the information that they need, then dismisses the baffled employees with a flutter of her wrists. Streep, a brilliant comedienne, pushes the terror tactics into satire, but the comedy moves in a shrewd direction: Streep's every gesture says that fashion is a multibillion-dollar business in which civility (except when directed at the famous) has become a disposable luxury. Miranda is a calculating monster—she has excised any remaining trace of softness from her temperament—but she understands her role in fashion so acutely that you can't make fun of her. In all, this has to be the most devastating boss-lady performance in the history of cinema. By comparison, Faye Dunaway's hysterics in "Network" come off as amusing freak-outs, and Sigourney Weaver in "Working Girl" is a coarse, leather-lunged shouter.

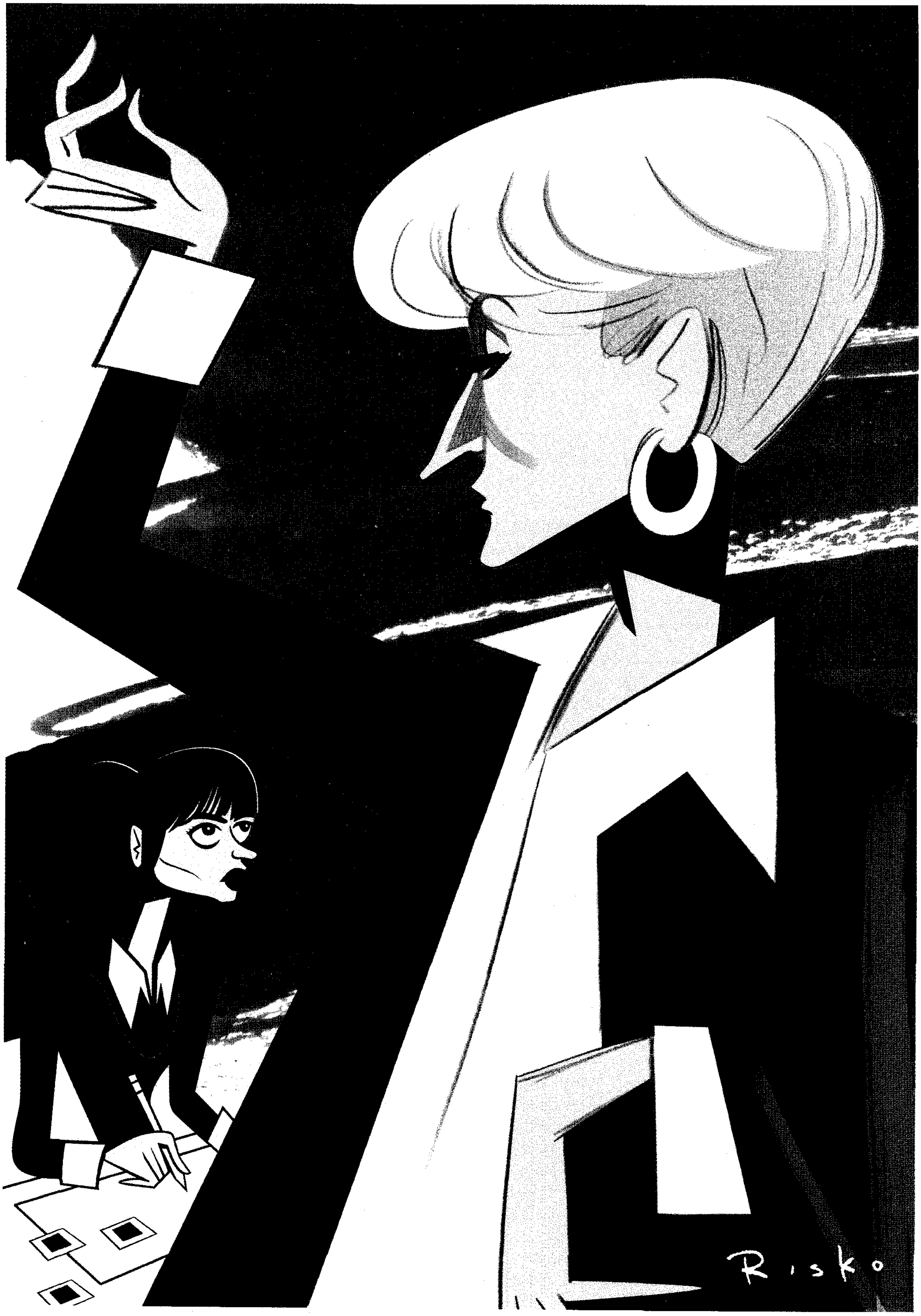
"The Devil Wears Prada" tells a familiar story, and it never goes much below the surface of what it has to tell. Still, what a surface! Bright and crisp and funny, the movie turns dish into art—or, if not quite into art, then at least into the kind of dazzling commercial entertainment that Hollywood, in the days of George Cukor or Stanley Donen, used to turn out. The director, David Frankel, has made only one feature, the 1995 "Miami Rhapsody," but he has directed multiple episodes of HBO's "Entourage" and "Sex and the City," and he demonstrates a smooth professionalism and knowingness that have virtually disappeared from American movies. For this material, Frankel has a perfect touch, strengthening the inconsequential with emotion, and teasing the self-important with satire. He is aided enormously by Aline Brosh McKenna's screenplay, which greatly improves the 2003 novel, by Lauren Weisberger, that the movie is derived from. After laboring for less than a year as an assistant to Anna Wintour, the editor-in-chief of *Vogue*, Weisberger created a trivially self-dramatizing fiction based on her trials. Merely by shifting the narrative voice from Weisberger's gabby heroine, Andy Sachs, to a silent third-person observer, the camera, the filmmakers have increased the material's control and comic point. Anne Hathaway, who plays Andy, is a tall, beautiful actress with oversized features—a smile wider than the Brooklyn Bridge, harlequin eyes—and she suggests, with no more than a panicky sidelong glance, what Weisberger takes pages to describe. The movie sees people whole, including Andy, whose ignorance and unearned sense of superiority get slapped more than once.

McKenna has shaped Weisberger's breathless iterations into a reliable plot—a primal Manhattan success story in the form of a fairy tale. Andy Sachs is the Cinderella figure. Instead of sleeping in ashes, she wears them: drab multi-blend sweaters and woollen skirts. Arriving at work as Miranda's new assistant, she is ruthlessly examined by the boss and by the other young women in the office, who, like wicked stepsisters, make fun of her clothes and increase the exhausting labors that Miranda has already dumped on her. A high-minded college journalist who wants to do serious work, Andy hangs up Miranda's coat and bag every morning after she flings them down on Andy's desk; she runs and fetches, crisscrossing the city, tending to Miranda's dog, her twin daughters, her dry cleaning. The rewards, initially, are low pay and no more than a distant touch of glamour. Andy won't get to the ball. Miranda has a first assistant, Emily (Emily Blunt), a status-hungry Brit in awe of her boss, and she pointedly tells Andy that only she, Emily, will be at Miranda's side during fashion week in Paris. In the last good high-fashion movie, Donen's "Funny Face" (1957), Audrey Hepburn, as an ingénue who becomes a model, was surrounded by whimsically imperious couture types—including Kay Thompson's tough, Diana Vreelandish editor—but that movie seems to have come out of a relatively gracious world. Hepburn wouldn't have survived at *Runway*.

This movie races along with the latte-enhanced pulse of the world's No. 1 power city. Frankel and his editor, Mark Livolsi, begin the picture with a perfectly calibrated montage of semi-starved beauties pulling on lingerie and clothes as they dress for work; it's like the lock-and-load scenes of soldiers strapping on their weapons in war movies, and the girls hit the streets of the Lower East Side and the

ROBERT RISKO

Meryl Streep as the fashion editor Miranda Priestly and Anne Hathaway as Andy Sachs, her put-upon assistant.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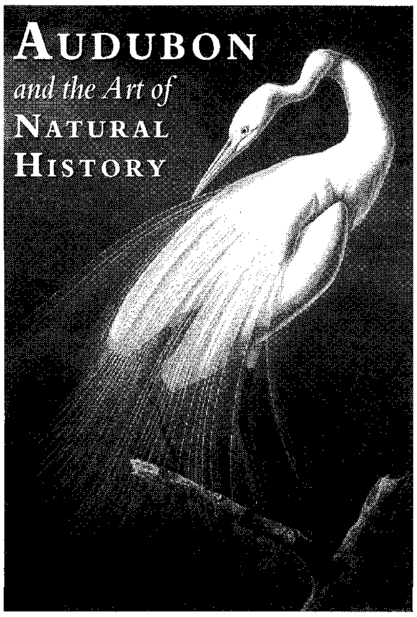

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Meatpacking District ready for battle. The movie cuts back and forth between the stresses and mascara-dissolving snits at work and scenes of Andy relaxing with her Manhattan pals, including her gentle boyfriend, Nate (Adrian Grenier). Andy's friends disapprove of the fashion world, but her scenes with them are a letdown—banal interludes. We're eager, as she is, to get back to the wickedness at the magazine.

Runway is the engine of desire—not the desire for sex, which the movie regards as relatively unimportant, but for power and for very beautiful things. The severity of the movie's good taste is awesome; Jess Gonchor's production design features the chaste beiges and whites of impervious authority. The cars—silver or black Mercedes sports sedans—match the insolent panache of the clothes (Bill Blass, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada) assembled by the costume designer, Patricia Field. "The Devil Wears Prada" is bracingly candid about the role of money in fashion's rituals. To outsiders, it is, after all, a strange business. A Chanel suit may be built to last, but the industrial side of fashion requires that many goods that seem perfect at a given moment look out of the question a few years later. Miranda Priestly is powerful because she makes definitive judgments that are meant to hold sway no longer than a season or two.

When Andy starts at *Runway*, she doesn't care about any of this. Her indifference is an affront to the staff, and, early in the movie, McKenna gives Miranda a nasty but brilliant speech in which she explains the structural connection between a sample from a fashion house—a cerulean belt—that Andy laughs at and the frumpy sweater that Andy is wearing. It's startling to hear the entire fashion world tied together as an economic unit—Adam Smith couldn't have done better. Nigel (Stanley Tucci), Miranda's second-in-command, completes Andy's education. A superlative wit whose acid observations are infallibly correct, Nigel reaches into the magazine's vast wardrobe room, where the samples are arrayed on racks, and dresses Andy in a Chanel jacket and boots and a Kristina Ti skirt. Narrowing his mouth and rolling his eyes, Tucci ventures into risky territory with this performance; his cackle and little dance when Nigel thinks that, at last, he has broken free of Miranda—whom he adores and loathes—is a classic moment. In scene after scene, Tucci brings out Hathaway's confidence, both as actor and as character. Under Nigel's guidance, and with the aid of *Runway*'s endless closet, Andy becomes a fashion princess. The rest of the movie asks whether she can assume this role without betraying herself.

It's slightly hypocritical of the movie to warn us against the seductive allure of the very goods that it is, in fact, seducing us with, but, for the audience, glamour has sensuous rewards that elude moral judgment. This movie delivers an inordinate amount of pleasure, and, in the end, even Miranda escapes our censure. At a reception at the Metropolitan Museum, Streep wears a stunning off-the-shoulder black gown (by Valentino) that exposes a good deal of her beautiful pale flesh. As she turns her head sideways and points her sexy nose, she evokes John Singer Sargent's most famous subject, the scandalous Madame X. At that moment, Miranda may still be a bitch, but she represents a distinct improvement: the haut-bourgeois ladies of the eighteen-eighties whom Sargent painted have been succeeded by professional women who look great and also run things.

The movie has everything but an adequate prince. As an opportunistic free-lance writer who pursues Andy, the Australian actor Simon Baker flaunts his golden-boy good looks, but he's meant to be no more than a heavily facetious flirt. Instead of a prince, the movie offers Andy a commoner—Nate, who wants to be a chef, and who, in the person of mop-haired, spaniel-eyed Adrian Grenier, seems too slow for her. "The Devil Wears Prada" will create worldly wisdom in the younger part of the audience, but in one way it departs from worldliness. It presents the heroine's career options as a simple choice between power and honor. It's the same choice that "Wall Street" offered Charlie Sheen's fledgling financier twenty years ago—either become vicious Gordon Gekko or hold on to your soul. "Working Girl" proposed that you can join the establishment without turning into a beast, but someday I'd like to see a film suggesting that you can be the boss without giving up your intellectual ideals, and that the alternative—rejecting power—has its corruptions, too. ♦

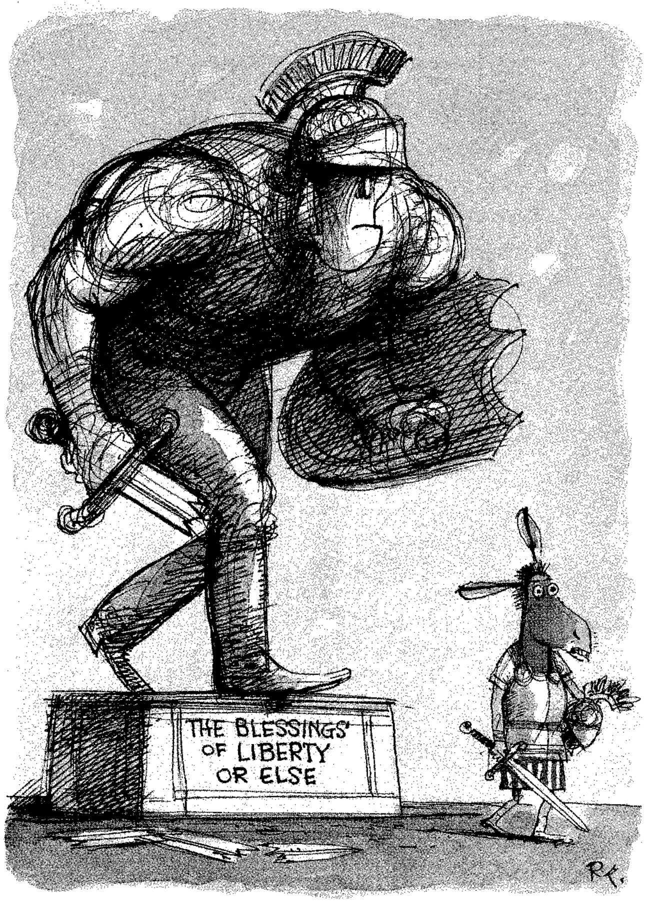
BOOKS

FIGHTING FAITHS

Can liberal internationalism be saved?

BY GEORGE PACKER

A few weeks after John Kerry's defeat in the 2004 election, Peter Beinart published an essay in *The New Republic*, the magazine he then edited, called "A Fighting Faith." The phrase originated with Whitman and was lifted from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.,'s 1949 book "The Vital Center," a battle cry of mid-century liberalism against the twin dangers of Soviet totalitarianism and its American apologists on the left, and hidebound business conservatism on the right. Beinart invoked Schlesinger, and other founders of the liberal anti-Communist organization Americans for Democratic Action, in order to throw down a challenge to the Democratic Party: "In sharp contrast to the first years of the cold war, post-September 11 liberalism has produced leaders and institutions—most notably Michael Moore and MoveOn—that do not put the struggle against America's new totalitarian foe at the center of their hopes for a better world." Just as liberal Democrats of Schlesinger's era fought and ultimately purged the fellow-travellers in their ranks, Beinart was spoiling for a struggle to wrest the Democratic Party away from its latest generation of "softs." Defeating the new Islamist threat, he wrote, "must be liberalism's north star. Methods for defeating totalitarian Islam are a legitimate topic of internal liberal debate. But the centrality of the effort is not. The recognition that liberals face an external enemy more grave, and more illiberal, than George W. Bush should be the litmus test of a decent left."


THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY OR ELSE
R.K.

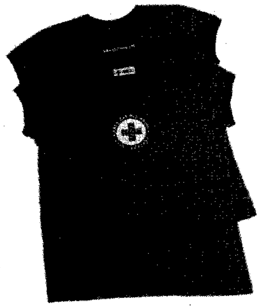
America's legitimacy has been imperilled, but not its power.

RICHARD THOMPSON

The essay created the stir that its author no doubt intended. Conferences were held in Washington, denunciations and defenses were issued, and then Beinart went on leave to turn his essay into a book, which has just been published. But some of the fight went out of "A Fighting Faith" on its way to becoming "The Good Fight: Why Liberals—and Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again" (HarperCollins; $25.95). Michael Moore and MoveOn hardly get a mention; Beinart no longer wants to provoke a battle for the soul of the Party. In the course of two hundred fluently argued pages, he reviews postwar history and shows how the Democrats gained (with Truman and Kennedy), and then lost (after Vietnam), and then began to recover (with Clinton), and then lost again (after September 11th) the ability to offer the public "their own narrative of American greatness." He urges liberals to take the new ideological enemy seriously. But taking it seriously turns out to mean doing what already comes (or ought to come) naturally to liberals: working with democratic allies and international institutions, doing more to help poor countries where jihadis breed, demonstrating American virtue rather than merely asserting it, connecting the quest for freedom and justice in the Muslim world with the same quest at home.

Beinart's proposals make good sense as policy and as politics, though he doesn't deal with some of the vexing dilemmas that almost always come up in practice: What if foreign aid (for example, America's billions to Egypt) doesn't tamp down extremism? What should we do in countries where the only real political choice for now is between secular dictatorship and elected Islamism? And his silence on Israel and Palestine suggests that he considers some acutely relevant subjects to be off limits. If there's anything controversial about his general proposals, though, that's more a symptom of the etiolated quality of the Democratic Party than a token of Beinart's audacity. He's simply asking liberals to muster some energy for the ideological fight against jihadism, in the belief that they are more likely to succeed than the Republican Party of George W. Bush, and in the related belief that they will never be entrusted with power until they do. Beinart is putting history and philosophy at the service of strategy—thus all the talk about a new liberal "narrative," a favorite word among political consultants.

Liberal anti-Communism—the tough-minded yet flexible creed of Harry S. Truman, Reinhold Niebuhr, Eleanor Roosevelt, Bayard Rustin, and John Kenneth Galbraith—has been offered as an example for the age of jihad by a number



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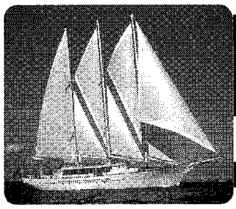

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of liberals (including me, in these pages two and a half years ago) who were disappointed by the Democratic Party’s uncertain response after September 11th and wanted a greater sense of both urgency and idealism. But Beinart seems to know that his book is out of joint with the present mood. Between the essay and the book, Americans lost their appetite for fighting faiths. And the reason, of course, is Iraq.

Beinart supported the war (as did I), and he begins “The Good Fight” with a preëmptive confession: “I was wrong. . . . I not only overestimated America’s capacities, I overestimated America’s legitimacy.” Beinart seems to sense that he will lose his readers at the outset unless he stands before them naked and ritually cleanses himself of the stain of the war. This calculation is no doubt correct: among most Democrats, repudiation of the Iraq war is the entry fee, and in the opinion journals and blogs far more effort has gone into settling the accounts of 2003 than into thinking through the dilemmas of 2006. But Beinart has a deeper problem than apologizing can solve. He is asking liberals to put at the heart of their agenda a ten-syllable idea that few of them ever give any thought to—antitotalitarianism—and to embrace, at a time of profound disaffection, “a cultural revival based on citizenship.”

Almost five years after the terrorist attacks, the spirit of civic activism and internationalism has withered on both the left and the right. The post-Iraq era will resemble the postwar golden age or the New Frontier far less than it will the Ford-Carter years, or the disillusioned turn inward that followed the collapse of Woodrow Wilson’s postwar dreams and the election of Warren G. Harding on the promise of a “return to normalcy.” (Bush himself somehow manages to combine features of both Presidents: Wilson’s sweeping rhetorical idealism with the dismal performance of Harding’s business-friendly and scandal-prone Administration.) Today, American conservatives are in headlong flight from their President’s democratic evangelism. It was always the taste of a tiny minority, known as the neoconservatives; it ill-suited the traditionalists’ skepticism about sociopolitical engineering. When Republican senators from Oklahoma and Alabama denounced anyone who doubted the Arab world’s readiness for democracy, it was mere partisan artifice. The ambitious young right-wing operatives who staffed the Coalition Provisional Authority, in Baghdad, have long since returned to their careers in Washington, many of them disgusted with the Iraqis they had gone to democratize. Conservative thinkers like William F. Buckley, Jr., and George Will have led the way back to their creed’s more cramped vision of human possibility. The President overextended his base as well as his military, and we are all in for a period of reaction.

The mood among liberals is not so different. Their hostility toward the Administration is so consuming that it leaves little room for imaginative thinking about any alternative foreign policy beyond the conviction that, to paraphrase Kerry, we should be opening firehouses in New Orleans and closing them in Baghdad. The real failure of the Democratic Party since September 11th is not appeasement or softness, as Karl Rove and, formerly, Peter Beinart have claimed, but intellectual shirking, a chronic urge to change the subject from the unpleasant realities of the age of jihad. The Democratic congressional leadership recently issued a three-page document called “Real Security,” which purports to lay out the Party’s views but which is so perfunctory that it reveals only the vacuum of views; the party of Roosevelt and the Four Freedoms has several things to say about port security and first responders, and nothing to say about reform in the Arab-Muslim world. John Kerry and other Democratic politicians and pundits have sometimes dismissed the prospect of democratization in the Middle East, sounding like realists of the Kissinger-Scowcroft school. Although the Party’s foreign-policy élites, hibernating these years in think tanks and universities, are almost by consensus liberal internationalists, the Party’s activists now have little sympathy for the creed. The majority of Democratic delegates at the 2004 Convention believed that the political systems of other countries are none of our business. In the next few years, we’re going to hear a lot about the need to focus on problems at home, the limits of America’s reach, the humiliations suffered by Muslims at Western hands, and the arrogance of thinking that we can export our system around the world. The President has turned "freedom" into a dirty word, and it needs to be carefully rehabilitated before it can be made a rallying cry. A book that wants to inspire a revival of the old expansive liberalism has first of all to reckon with this inhospitable political landscape.

Beinart's assumption that jihadism is our generation's Fascism or Communism contains more than an element of romantic nostalgia, and the analogy breaks down analytically at several points. For one thing, Michael Moore and his enthusiasts are not fellow-travelling Salafists, even if many more liberals are guilty of underestimating or wishing away the jihadi threat than hyping it. The party that aspires to retake power should have to grapple with Beinart's account of earlier Democratic Administrations that wanted to use it on behalf of ideas worthy of being called liberal. But the real question is whether, five years into what the Pentagon calls "the long war," the history of Cold War liberalism offers a useful guide to foreign policy.

Francis Fukuyama, the ex-neoconservative who publicly broke with his former comrades and now embraces what he calls "realistic Wilsonianism" (as opposed to Madeleine Albright's "realistic idealism," or the "democratic realism" of Fukuyama's friend turned foe Charles Krauthammer, foreign-policy manifestos being largely a matter of tempering the right ism with the right adjective), has urged a toning down of rhetoric. "We are fighting hot counterinsurgency wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and against the international jihadist movement, that we need to win," Fukuyama wrote in his recent book "America at the Crossroads." "But conceiving the larger struggle as a global war comparable to the world wars or the Cold War vastly overstates the scope of the problem, suggesting that we are taking on a large part of the Arab and Muslim worlds. Before the Iraq war, we were probably at war with no more than a few thousand people around the world who would consider martyring themselves and causing nihilistic damage to the United States. The scale of the problem has grown because we have unleashed a maelstrom."

But the maelstrom is always the point of the provocation. Although the Iraq war wasn't inevitable after September 11th, a global polarization along religious lines probably was. Much of the Muslim world already felt persecuted by the West before the attacks, and Bush's unfortunate use of the word "crusade" immediately afterward has been remembered, while his and Tony Blair's many declarations that Islam is a religion of peace have been ignored or forgotten. In spite of Bush's efforts *not* to unleash a civilizational war (thus the "war on terror," rather than the more apt "war on radical Islamism"), the battle lines were already forming well before shock and awe and Abu Ghraib. I was in Somalia during the Afghanistan war, and even Western-oriented Muslims there saw the overthrow of the Taliban as the start of a war against Islam. What Fukuyama calls "the international jihadist movement" might include only a few tens of thousands of militants, but for passive sympathy or active support it can count on tens of millions of Muslims in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. Fukuyama, a political philosopher, ignores the political nature of the problem.

Jihadism poses two very different threats to the United States: the danger of a catastrophic attack inside the country by a handful of dedicated individuals, and the much broader power to catalyze ideological extremism among vast numbers of people. The Bush Administration has waged this war by playing on the fear of the first at home while failing to address the second abroad and thereby intensifying it. In the near future, radical Islamism is a greater danger to Muslims and other citizens of foreign countries than to Americans. This is a moral concern, but it also has strategic consequences, because radical Islamism, like any aggressive creed, tends to spill over borders, in the form of ideological influence (Saudi Arabia, Pakistan), terrorism (Iran, Afghanistan), or metastasized civil war (Sudan). It is prone to apocalyptic politics even in its electoral versions, which is why democracy is not an automatic solution to jihadism and might even make it worse. The prolonged and violent demonstrations against the Danish cartoons were a staged

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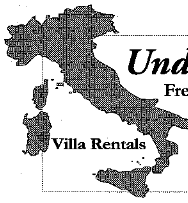
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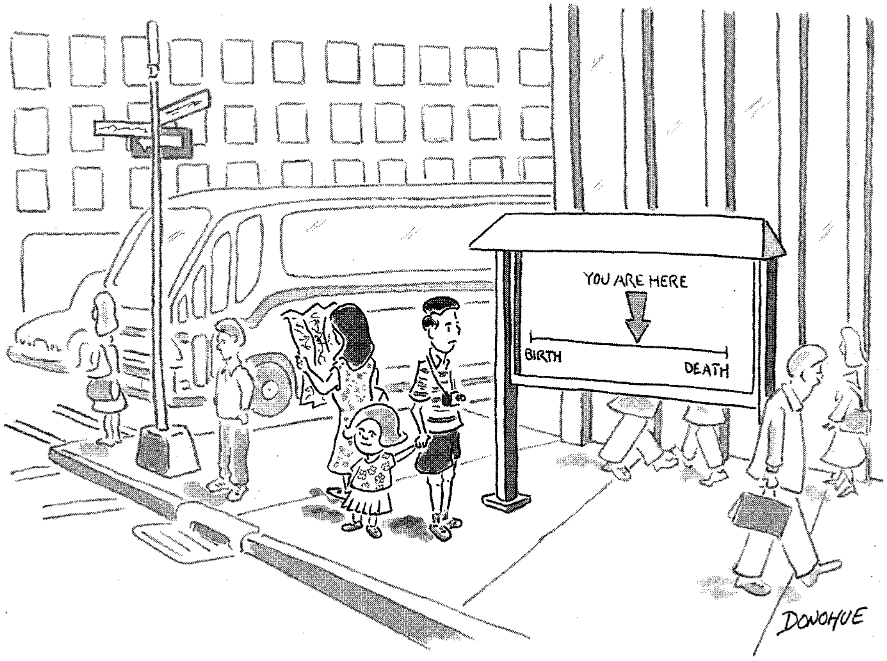


attempt by Islamists to intimidate their enemies in their own countries and in the West. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran, is bidding for the mantle of global leader of the oppressed, and such is the current unpopularity of the United States that his paranoid ramblings in a letter to Bush were respectfully reviewed by European leftists. A recent Pew poll found that majorities in Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan don't believe that Arabs launched the September 11th attacks. Al Qaeda as a global operation appears to be seriously damaged; but the temperature of Islamism has risen sharply in many places in the past five years. Anyone who imagines that the problem is confined to the suicide bombers and their recruiters has not visited a Muslim country lately.

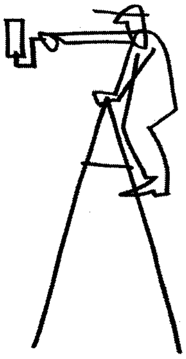
Ultimately, the Cold War analogy is unhelpful, because it allows Americans to make a virtue of our ignorance. Beinart is one of those bright young journalists who have spent their lives in topnotch universities and Washington political circles rather than in places where jihad is more than just a word. Islamism is far stranger to us than Communism. It requires a deeper, subtler knowledge of local realities around the Muslim world, in all their variety, than most American writers and politicians have shown. The policymakers of the Kennedy era overlooked the essentially nationalist nature of Vietnamese Communism because they were swept up in the binary thinking of Kennedy's call to "pay any price, bear any burden." How much less do today's policymakers know about the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the factions vying within the Arab Gulf states, the Muslim minorities in Europe, the configuration of power in Iran, the causes of the Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan, the Islamist takeover in Mogadishu, or the rising terrorist threat in Bangladesh? The grand, overarching "narrative" of antitotalitarianism that Beinart offers can't explain the different kinds of trouble that America faces in a chaotic world. It substitutes will for understanding, which is just as dangerous as the reverse—if the Iraq war has taught us anything, it should be that.

Critics of liberal internationalism—and their numbers are growing—see it as the ideological twin of Bush's neoconservatism, just as grandiose and aggressive, all the more thoroughly swaddled in moral self-love and always ending in some disastrous crusade. In this view, the Iraq war is not a perversion of the Truman spirit, as Beinart now believes, but its ultimate fulfillment, so that the President isn't wrong to claim Truman's legacy (while predicting a similar vindication by history). In this light, Cold War liberalism is no model of any kind.

The Catholic antiwar writer James Carroll's new, six-hundred-page history of the Pentagon, "House of War," covers some of the same ground as Beinart's book, but draws an entirely different lesson. His thesis—endlessly repeated in a book of prodigious research and moralizing—is that the Pentagon has been a force for lawless, nuclear-armed aggression, unfettered by civilian government, ever since the building was dedicated, in January of 1943. Carroll, an ex-priest and the son of an Air Force general with whom he painfully broke over Vietnam, writes with erudite passion about the aerial bombing of Japanese and German cities in 1945, which led to mass civilian death, and the nuclear madness that became America's grand strategy in the nineteen-fifties. But his mission in "House of War" is undiscriminating: he wants to prove that American power since the Second World War has been a disaster for the world. The Marshall Plan was the American equivalent of the Soviet Iron Curtain, while Moscow's 1948 blockade of Berlin was an anti-inflationary measure. NATO, expanded under President Clinton to include much of Eastern Europe, receives particular criticism as a threat to the Russian sphere of influence. As for the terrorist attack on the Pentagon, we sort of had it coming: "Whether Americans can acknowledge it or not, there was a naming of the monster on 9/11: the War Department is at war." Carroll is an anti-antitotalitarian. He has no interest in ideologies, including murderous ones, that take root in foreign countries. His world view begins and ends with America—a darker mirror image of the neoconservative notion that American might is always right.

The critical view is not confined to the pacifist and anti-imperialist left. It can count among its most thoughtful and influential adherents the writer David Rieff, who a decade ago in Bosnia was a leading liberal internationalist himself. The interventions of the past ten years, culminating with Iraq, have turned Rieff into a deep skeptic of power used in the name of human rights—a self-proclaimed realist. Writing recently in *The Nation*, and amplifying his latest book, "At the Point of a Gun," he suggested that "when you posit the fundamental benevolence of the liberal universalist order and identify the United States as guarantor of that order . . . you are stuck with the prospect of a virtually untrammeled use of American power." In other words, there is a straight and not very long line from the Atlantic Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to Abu Ghraib and Haditha. Like Kurtz, those who begin as humanitarians have a way of ending as barbarians.

Rieff writes with the bitter scorn of an ex-interventionist, and he forces innocent believers to confront the most painful questions about the motives and consequences of their actions. He dislikes, above all, the moral vanity inherent in American exceptionalism—the idea, as the Bush Administration's crucial 2002 position paper "National Security Strategy of the United States" put it, of "a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests." For Rieff, there is no union; America is just like any other empire, acting out of selfish concerns, and its moral fantasies make its power only more dangerous. Rieff is in love with disillusionment, and he has resolved the crisis in his own outlook by taking an impossibly pure position, like T. S. Eliot embracing Anglo-Catholicism as an antidote to his own despair. For Rieff, the fact that NATO was partly designed to enhance American power means that a benign view of Truman's foreign policy is childish. Having gazed into the dark heart of liberal internationalism and recoiled, he doesn't allow the possibility that NATO is both a tool for America to assert its will *and* an arrangement that has benefitted large numbers of people, most of them non-Americans, for more than half a century.



American power, currently reviled around the world, is an inescapable fact, and when it allows itself to be harnessed to the wishes and interests of other nations, especially democratic ones, it can be a constructive force and win wider acceptance. As the German journalist Josef Joffe writes in his new book, "Überpower: The Imperial Temptation of America" (Norton; $24.95), "If the United States is an empire, it is a liberal one—a power that seeks not to grab but to co-opt." This is not a narcissistic fantasy but an accurate description by a European who, unburdened by the torments of exceptionalism as few American writers of any persuasion are, can say matter-of-factly to his American friends, You have made your problems worse, you have acted recklessly and selfishly, but don't overdo the self-criticism. Other countries naturally resent your power, but most still prefer it to the alternatives. The world can't afford these wild mood swings.

One of the greatest challenges of the next few years will be to rescue democracy, human rights, and national security from the company these words have recently kept. A clear-eyed understanding of our predicament begins with the recognition that American interests and values do not always rhyme; imagining that they do makes it more likely that in the end we'll compromise both. How can the U.S. fight jihadism without supporting dictatorships? Regime change by force has proved disastrous; elections have brought to power Islamists whose commitment to democracy is doubtful; ongoing blank checks written to Saudi princes, Pakistani generals, and a decaying dynasty in Cairo are bound to bankrupt sender and receiver alike. It's hard to imagine a waning of the jihadist threat that doesn't involve some kind of liberalization in the Muslim world, either because Islamism comes to be reformed from within or because it comes to be rejected by subject populations. (Iran, several decades ahead of the Arab countries, is where this struggle can be seen in sharpest relief.) A serious American policy toward Islamism will do well what the Bush Administration has done badly or not at all, and without the triumphalist speeches: modest, informed, persistent support for reformers, without grand promises of regime change; concerted efforts at reconstruction and counter-insurgency that bring to bear the full range of government agencies as well as alliances and international institutions. Since these tasks will fall to the United States one way or another, we should learn to do them better rather than vow never to try again. Large ideas drawn from historical analogies can help as guiding frameworks, but the glamorous certainties they seem to offer are illusions; we still have to think for ourselves. ♦

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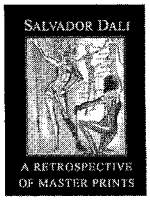

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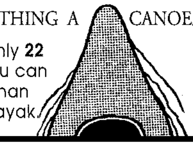

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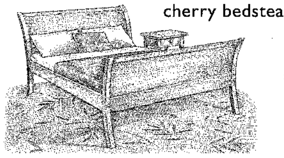

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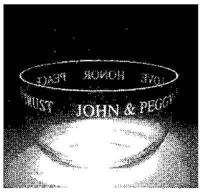

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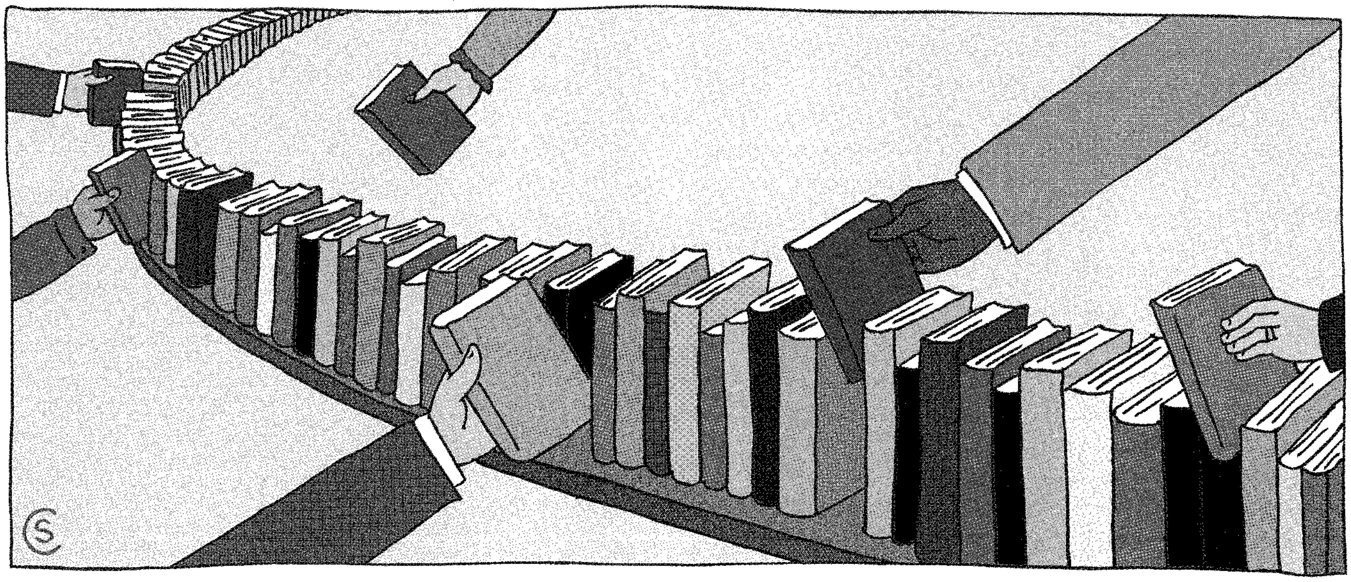
BOOKS

GOING LONG

In the new "long tail" marketplace, has the blockbuster met its match?

BY JOHN CASSIDY

A quick test of your pop-culture knowledge: How many of the twenty-five best-selling albums in American history can you name, and what proportion of them were recorded in this century?



If the old entertainment economy was about blockbusters, Chris Anderson argues, the new era "will be equally about niches."

SEYMOUR CHWAST

If your first thought was Michael Jackson and your second was seventies guitar bands, you should do pretty well with the first part of the question. The most popular album of all time is the Eagles' "Greatest Hits, 1971-1975," which has sold about twenty-nine million copies in the United States since its release, in 1976. The No. 2 album is Jackson's "Thriller," which has sold twenty-seven million copies since 1982. Next on the list are albums by Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, AC/DC, and Billy Joel.

The second part of the question is a little trickier: none of the top-twenty-five albums were released after 2000. Indeed, only three recent albums make the Recording Industry Association of America's top-one-hundred list: Shania Twain's "Up!" and Norah Jones's "Come Away with Me," from 2002; and OutKast's 2003 double album, "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below." Not one album released in the past three years has made the list.

What are we to make of this, other than to point out that it must have something to do with online file-sharing and iPods? A lot, according to Chris Anderson, a business journalist who formerly worked at *The Economist* and now edits *Wired*. In his new book, "The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More" (Hyperion; $24.95), Anderson argues that we are witnessing the decline of the blockbuster. The "emerging digital entertainment economy is going to be radically different from today's mass market," he writes. "If the twentieth-century entertainment industry was about hits, the twenty-first will be equally about niches."

Anderson's inspiration for writing "The Long Tail," which grew out of a story in the October, 2004, issue of *Wired*, was a visit he paid to a digital jukebox company called Ecast. In business, it's often said that twenty per cent of the products generate about eighty per cent of the revenue. This version of the so-called 80/20 rule might suggest that most of a retailer's inventory—in the case of Ecast, about ten thousand albums ready to download—is worthless. But when Anderson spoke with Ecast's chief executive he found that ninety-eight per cent of the albums in the library sold at least one track every three months. "And because these were just bits in a database that cost nearly nothing to store and deliver," Anderson writes, "all these onesies and twosies started to add up."

Anderson began to suspect that he was onto something. Another online music retailer, Rhapsody, which has a library of about 1.5 million songs, provided him with monthly sales statistics that he presents in a series of graphs, with the horizontal axis showing songs ranked by popularity and the vertical axis showing the number of times each one was downloaded. In a typical month, each of the top thousand tracks, which appear on the extreme left of the graph, was downloaded more than ten thousand times. But these hits represented less than one-hundredth of one per cent of Rhapsody's vast catalogue. What about the other 1,499,000 songs? Anderson writes:

> What's extraordinary is that virtually every single one of those tracks will sell. From the perspective of a store like Wal-Mart, the music industry stops at less than 60,000 tracks. However, for online retailers like Rhapsody the market is seemingly never-ending. Not only is every one of Rhapsody's top 60,000 tracks streamed at least once each month, but the same is true for its top 100,000, top 200,000, and top 400,000—even its top 600,000, top 900,000, and be-

yond. As fast as Rhapsody adds tracks to its library, those songs find an audience, even if it's just a handful of people every month, somewhere in the world.

This is the Long Tail.

Once you've seen one long tail, you start seeing them everywhere. Netflix, a DVD-rental company that allows its customers to order films online and receive them in the mail, has a library of more than sixty thousand titles. At Blockbuster stores, ninety per cent of the movies rented are new releases; at Netflix, about seventy per cent are from the back catalogue, and many of them are documentaries, art-house movies, and other little-known films that might never have had theatrical release. "The lesson is that what we thought was a naturally sharp drop-off in demand for movies after a certain point was actually just an artifact of the traditional costs of offering them," Anderson notes. "Netflix changed the economics of offering niches, and, in doing so, reshaped our understanding about what people actually want to watch."

Both eBay and Google turn out, in Anderson's account, to be long-tail businesses, too. On any given day, about thirty million individual items are bought and sold on eBay, many of them cheap and obscure. Barely a decade after Pierre Omidyar founded eBay, more than seven hundred thousand Americans report it as their primary or secondary source of income, according to a study by the market-research firm AC Nielsen. For Google, the long tail is populated by small advertisers. Major corporations pay to get their ads placed next to the results of popular search terms, such as "luxury S.U.V.s" and "flat-screen televisions." But much of Google's annual revenue, which now exceeds five billion dollars, comes from tiny companies whose ads appear next to queries like "Victorian jewelry" and "Hudson Valley inns."

Even an industry as old-school as book publishing exhibits long-tail behavior. In 2004, Nielsen BookScan tracked the sales of 1.2 million books and found that nine hundred and fifty thousand of them sold fewer than ninety-nine copies. And yet these scattered individual purchases add up to a surprisingly large market, especially at online booksellers. At Amazon.com, for example, about a quarter of all book sales come from outside the site's top-one-hundred-thousand best-sellers. "What's truly amazing about the Long Tail is the sheer size of it," Anderson writes. "Again, if you combine enough of the non-hits, you've actually established a market that rivals the hits."

The forces behind the long tail are largely technological: cheap computer hardware, which reduces the cost of making and storing information products; ubiquitous broadband, which cuts the cost of distribution; and elaborate "filters," such as search engines, blogs, and online reviews, which help to match supply and demand. "Think of each of these three forces as representing a new set of opportunities in the emerging Long Tail marketplace," Anderson suggests. "The democratized tools of production are leading to a huge increase in the number of producers. Hyperefficient digital economies are leading to new markets and marketplaces. And finally, the ability to tap the distributed intelligence of millions of consumers to match people with the stuff that suits them best is leading to the rise of all sorts of new recommendation and marketing methods, essentially serving as the new tastemakers."

Among the "tastemakers" Anderson cites are Daily Candy, which sends e-mails telling fashionable women what to buy and wear, and Boing Boing, a technology blog that is read by geeks the world over. "In today's Long Tail markets, the main effect of filters is to help people move from the world they know ('hits') to the world they don't ('niches')," Anderson writes. "In a sense, good filters have the effect of driving demand down the tail by revealing goods and services that appeal more than the lowest common denominator fare that crowds the narrow channels of traditional mass-market distribution."

All this is snappily argued and thought-provoking, if not quite as original as Anderson's publishers would have us believe. Back in 1980, another futurologist, Alvin Toffler, anticipated the "de-massifying" of society in his best-selling book "The Third Wave" (Bantam; $7.99), which is still in print. "The Second Wave Society is industrial and based on mass production, mass distribution, mass consumption, mass education, mass media, mass recreation and entertainment," Toffler said in a 1999 interview. But no longer: "The era of mass society is over.... No more mass production. No more mass consumption.... No more mass entertainment."

Not only did Toffler, writing a decade before the advent of the World Wide Web, recognize information as the basic resource of the modern economy; he also discussed concepts like knowledge workers, customization, peer production, and several other "big-think" concepts that are still providing stories for magazines like *Wired*, *Fast Company*, *Business 2.0*, and, indeed, *The New Yorker*. The Internet has accelerated the trends that Toffler identified, but that's not news, either. In 1998, Kevin Kelly, a technology writer who also worked for *Wired*, published a book called "New Rules for the New Economy," in which he described the emerging order thus: "Niche production, niche consumption, niche diversion, niche education. Niche World."

The real novelty of Anderson's book is not his thesis but its representation in the form of a neat, readily graspable picture: the long-tail curve. For decades, economists and scientists have been using this graph, which is formally known as a power-law distribution, to describe things like the distribution of wealth or the relative size of cities. By applying the long tail to the online world, Anderson brings intellectual order to what often looks like pointless activity. The teen-ager who spends his weekends updating a blog that nobody reads and shooting silly videos to post on YouTube.com? He is, as Anderson's chapter on "The New Producers" tells us, a valiant citizen of the long tail.

The least convincing part of Anderson's book is his treatment of what he calls "the short head," the part of the curve where popular products reside. Although he acknowledges that best-selling books and blockbuster movies won't vanish overnight, he suggests that demand for them will gradually decline: "the primary effect of the long tail is to shift our taste towards niches."

Is this what we're seeing? In the film industry, more movies are being produced than ever before, but seven of the ten all-time top-grossing films worldwide have come out since 2000: three "Lord of the Rings" movies, three "Harry Potter" movies, and "Shrek 2." It's true that over-all attendance at movie theatres has been slipping, but the biggest films are still doing well, as was demonstrated recently by

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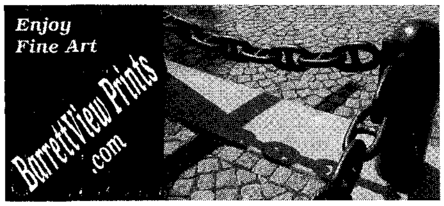


"The Da Vinci Code" and "X-Men: The Last Stand," both of which enjoyed highly successful opening weekends despite tepid reviews. Four of the top-selling novels ever published—the works of J. K. Rowling and Dan Brown—have appeared since 2000, too.

The music industry, on which Anderson bases much of his argument, may be a special case. Album rock reached its peak in the late nineteen-seventies, and, with the rise of genres such as hip-hop, house, and grunge, the music market had begun splintering well before the Web arrived. File-sharing and the iPod accelerated this trend, but this hasn't eroded the demand for the most popular songs: if illegal downloads are included in the "sales figures," the over-all demand for songs by supergroups like U2 and the Rolling Stones may be greater than ever.

A widening of choices doesn't necessarily lead to cultural fragmentation and a defection from mainstream fare; sometimes it has the opposite effect, as befuddled consumers congregate around the same things. To be sure, some curious individuals will rent Japanese anime and science documentaries from Netflix, but far more people will turn up for the fifth "Harry Potter" film and "Shrek 3," because they'll want to see the movies that everybody's talking about. Big-time movie releases aren't merely stories and images on a screen; they're news events—a fact that Hollywood studio executives have long recognized. Sony's "The Da Vinci Code" was a good illustration. By the time the movie came out, it had received so much publicity that millions of people wanted to feel part of a social event, whatever the reviewers had to say.

It's the same for books and popular music: the more copies a thriller or a pop song sells, the more likely you are to pick it up to see what all the fuss is about. Even in the online era, to be human is to follow the herd. Far from undermining this "network effect," the Internet strengthens it by providing instant communication and feedback. In a recent online study conducted by researchers at Columbia, participants were allowed to download free songs from a list of unsigned bands. When they were informed about the preferences of their peers, the popular songs got more popular—and the unpopular songs got more unpopular. Blockbusters and niche products will continue to coexist, because they're flip sides of the same phenomenon, something economists call "increasing returns," whereby the big get bigger and the rest fight for the scraps. A long-tail world doesn't threaten the whales or the minnows; it threatens those who cater to the neglected middle, such as writers of "mid-list" fiction and producers of adult dramas.

There's another blind spot in Anderson's analysis. The long tail has meant that online commerce is being dominated by just a few businesses—mega-sites that can house those long tails. Even as Anderson speaks of plenitude and proliferation, you'll notice that he keeps returning for his examples to a handful of sites—iTunes, eBay, Amazon, Netflix, MySpace. The successful long-tail aggregators can pretty much be counted on the fingers of one hand. Although the online economy has existed for only a decade, businesses like these—and you can add Google and Yahoo—have already established seemingly impregnable positions. If you're a typical Internet user, when you need to find information you go to Google; when you're looking for a book or a CD, you go to Amazon; when you want a new golf club, you go to eBay; when you want to download a song, you go to iTunes.

There's an ugly name for industries that are controlled by three or four big firms: oligopolies. A few decades ago, these lumbering creatures were easy to spot. In the skies, cosseted airlines like American, United, and Delta charged passengers a small fortune for the privilege of flying; in broadcast television, ABC, CBS, and NBC dictated what viewers could watch. Today, thanks to globalization, deregulation, and technological progress, many of the twentieth-century industrial behemoths have fallen by the wayside. But don't assume that giant, exploitative firms are a thing of the past.

In recent years, eBay has sharply increased its commission rates; Amazon has admitted charging its customers different prices for the same goods; and Apple Computer has stubbornly refused to make its iTunes service compatible with portable music players other than iPods. Has the New Economy really moved past the familiar "winner take all" dynamic? That depends on whether you're looking at the long tail—or at who's wagging it. ♦

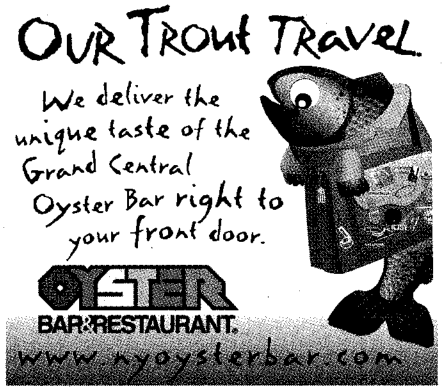
BRIEFLY NOTED

Lost Hearts in Italy, *by Andrea Lee (Random House; $23.95).* The fall from innocence of Americans abroad is a Jamesian theme, but here the Grand Tour has been replaced by international finance and the naïfs are married Harvard grads, posted to Rome. The husband, the scion of a shabby but genteel New England clan, disdains his Wasp heritage and worships his black wife; she is drawn to a predatory Italian, a "peasant" who has bullied his way to the helm of a corporate empire. The adultery plays out in first-class airport lounges and ornate hotel rooms, and Rome reprises its traditional role as the city of dissolution, "rich and coarse at the same time, like a mixture of sackcloth and brocade." In chillingly urbane prose, Lee takes the full measure of her characters' folly, as they prove faithless not only to each other but to themselves.

Playing in the Light, *by Zoë Wicomb (New Press; $24.95).* In her ambitious third novel, Wicomb explores South Africa's history through a woman's attempt to answer questions surrounding her past. Marion Campbell discovers that she is the daughter of "play-whites," a couple legally classified as "coloured" who dared to obliterate their history and cut family ties in order to acquire the benefits of whiteness. Marion's mother plastered herself with makeup to prevent her body from betraying her; in her father's view, "whiteness is without restrictions. It has the fluidity of milk; its glow is far-reaching." The subterfuge, however, made for an unhappy household. Marion's friendship with a young black woman deepens her understanding of the importance of historical memory, and her struggle for self-knowledge becomes, in Wicomb's able hands, a sign of South Africa's hopeful post-apartheid future.

Horace Greeley, *by Robert C. Williams (New York University; $34.95).* Horace Greeley was America's most famous editor and, with his *Tribune*, a defining voice in mid-nineteenth-century politics. He was an early promoter of Thoreau, lent money to Poe, and employed as foreign correspondents both Mark Twain and Karl Marx (who described Greeley to Engels as a "jackass with the face of an angel"). Williams gives a straightforward account of Greeley's personal life, which included an unhappy marriage made bleaker by the couple's fascination with utopian communities and dietary fads. To contemporaries, Greeley was a portrait in contradictions: he helped found the Republican Party, then ran for President as a Democrat; was late in becoming an "anti-slavery man," then excoriated Lincoln for moving slowly on emancipation; urged headlong assaults on the Confederacy, then bailed Jefferson Davis out of jail. Williams, however, argues that Greeley unswervingly devoted himself to a single ideal—American freedom—and was, in turn, crucial to its development.

Underwater to Get Out of the Rain, *by Trevor Norton (Da Capo; $25).* At the age of fourteen, after a Hans Hass TV show in which Hass's wife peeled and ate a banana under water, Norton headed to the bay in his Northumberland home town and plunged into the cold, murky water, deciding that this "was the real world." In this beautifully written combination of memoir and natural history, Norton, a retired professor of marine biology, recalls night explorations in kelp forests among transparent shrimp visible only because of food moving through their guts, and celebrates unusual sea cultures, such as that of the ama, in Japan—women who free-dive for abalone shells in temperatures so cold that they lose half their body fat each winter. Norton's style is whimsical but tempered by a passionate concern for the ocean's vulnerability to human impact.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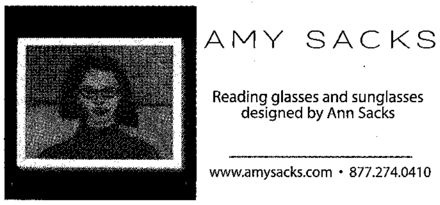
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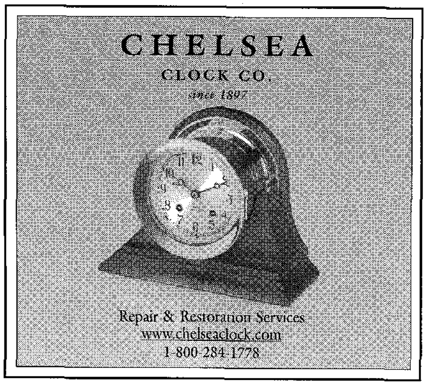

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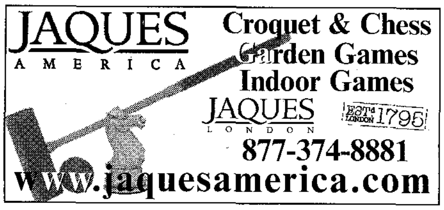

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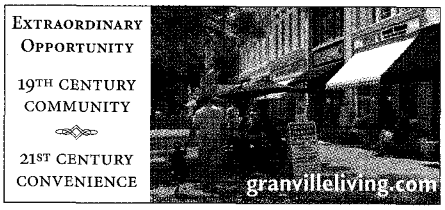

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DANCING

SECRETS

American Ballet Theatre at the Met.

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

Diana Vishneva, a principal dancer at the Kirov Ballet and at American Ballet Theatre, once told Francis Mason, of *Ballet Review*, that in any ballet she always tried to find "a particular thing that allows me to know what I am doing with the role, not just to do it beautifully." She needed, she said, to find her own "secret." Sometimes when you hear such words, you tremble. Many theatrical absurdities—chaste Carmens, happy Hamlets—have been perpetrated by people on similar quests. But, in a performance of "Giselle" with Angel Corella at A.B.T. in mid-June, Vishneva, who is now thirty, did find her own secret to that ballet, and the result was a show that left people sitting dazed in their seats afterward.

"Giselle," created in 1841, has a simple, two-step plot: sin and atonement. Giselle, a peasant girl, is being wooed by a handsome country fellow who has turned up in her Rhineland village. In fact, he is merely disguised as a country fellow; he is really Albrecht, the Duke of Silesia—the fiancé, furthermore, of a local noblewoman—and therefore in no position to make an honest woman of Giselle. When she finds that out, at the end of Act I, she loses her mind and dies on the spot. But, this being a Romantic ballet, she doesn't just go away. She becomes one of the wilis, the ghosts of girls who died before their wedding day, and who roam the forest in beautiful, vampiric gangs, looking for young men to murder. In Act II, Albrecht comes, in the night, to Giselle's grave and is met by the wilis, including his beloved. But Giselle is a newly fledged wili, and she has not yet forgotten about Christian forgiveness. As the wilis surround Albrecht, she dances and dances in his place, trying to deflect their interest. At last, church bells ring, signalling dawn. The wilis, who cannot kill in daylight, slink off. Giselle returns to her grave, and Albrecht, repentant, returns to his life.

This ballet has been performed thousands of times, and it is glazed by overhandling. The Europeans, with their love of revisionist productions, have given it various new twists. (The Swedish choreographer Mats Ek, in his 1982 production, set Act II in an insane asylum.) But the Russians and the Americans, for the most part, have stuck to the old story, going back and forth on only one matter—Albrecht's motivation. Is he a cad, a vile seducer? Or is he a young man in love, and defiant of class barriers? As for the heroine, the outlines of her role haven't varied that much. Giselle, as a rule, is a sweet, vivacious village maiden, in love for the first time.

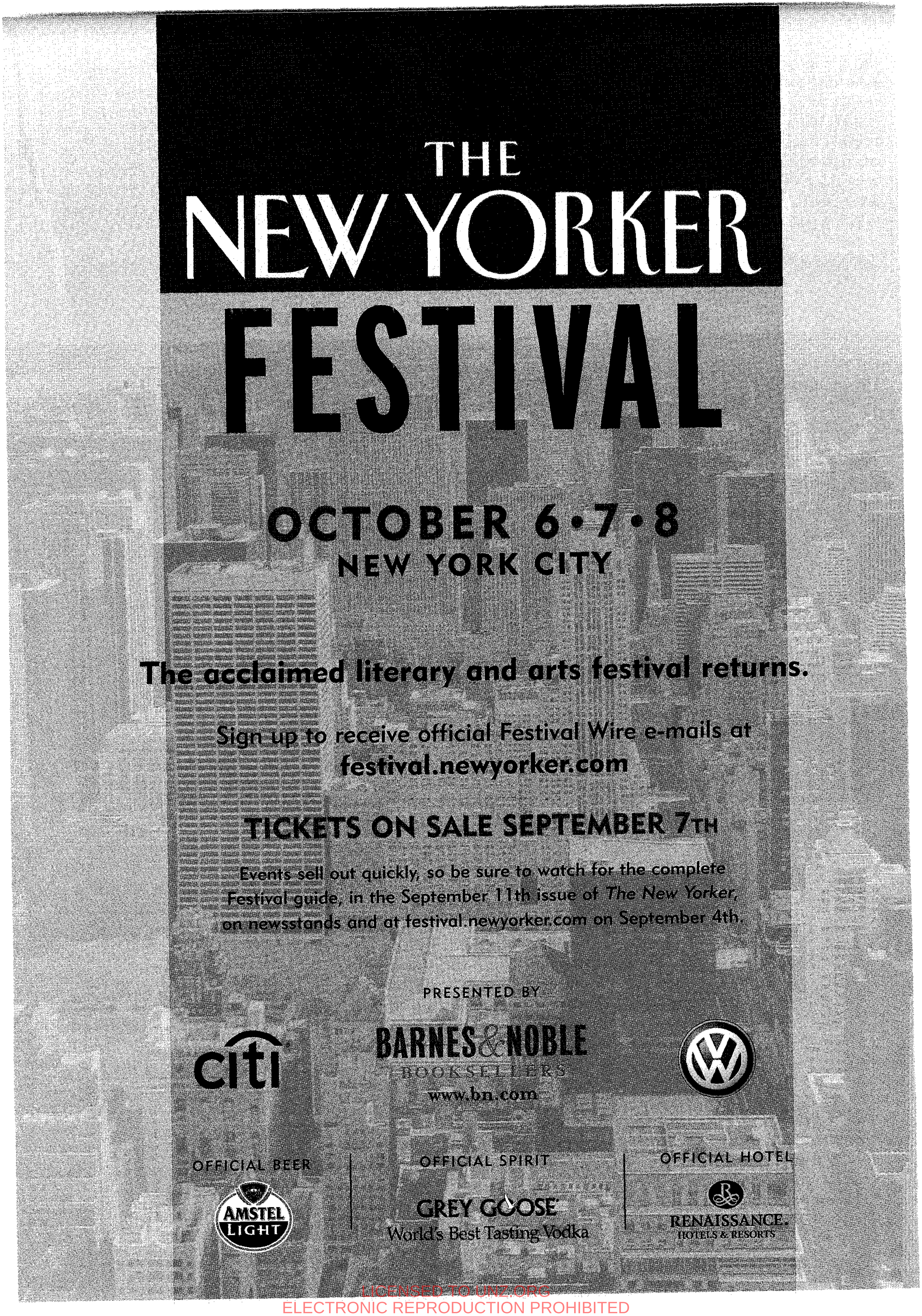
It was about the nature of that love that Vishneva found her secret this season. I saw her do "Giselle" last year, also with Corella, and her interpretation was canonical. This year, however, she introduced a new element: erotic excitement. There was nothing lurid here—no come-hither looks. It was all done through phrasing, breathing, placement. Last year, when she performed Giselle's famous hops on point with ronds de jambe—little circlings of the working leg—she addressed them to Albrecht, as if to say, "Look how pretty I am. You should love me." This year, that working leg was clearly beckoning him: "Come to me, come up my leg." Again, this was subtly managed, but when she topped it off by circling the stage in a frenzy of piqué turns I burst into tears. I was afraid for her. The fact that Corella was doing a "cad" Albrecht, and quite persuasively, gave one more reason to fear.

Act II was just as hair-raising. Everyone knows that in the second half of the ballet Giselle is dead, but she's up there running around, so how dead can she be? You forget. Vishneva, however, did not let you forget. Her face was powdered absolutely white, with black eyeshadow. This was not someone you would want to meet in an alley. Corella responded accordingly. Most Albrechts, when the wili Giselle first appears, receive this visitation in a mood of pious awe. Corella acted as though he had seen a ghost—which he had—and a ghost she remained, however beautiful, throughout. When he lifted her, it was as if he were picking up something made of paper. It gave you the shivers—a historically accurate sensation. When "Giselle" was created, there was a widespread mythology, in European writing, about German forests and the spirits who lived there, working dark charms undreamed of by the Enlightenment. Those tales were the main source of "Giselle"'s libretto. I don't know if Vishneva has read any of this literature, but that's the sort of story she delivered. It was like a cross between a prayer and a horror movie. In many productions, Albrecht, after Giselle has saved him and left him, kneels and buries his anguished face in his hands. In this version, Corella did not kneel, nor did he seem anguished, exactly. He merely stood, center stage, with his handsome, sweaty visage raised to the light. Maybe this was the light of day, calling him back to its embrace. I don't think so, though. Giselle was happy to go to her grave, and so, I believe, this Albrecht will be, when he gets his chance. Given these two people, this is what had to happen. It is not a moral tale; it is a tragedy.

When Vishneva made her first appearances with the Kirov in New York, she was featured in difficult allegro roles in two important Balanchine ballets, "Symphony in C" and "Rubies," and she did every last step, which was no small achievement. Russian dancers are not trained for the speed that Balanchine's work demands. ("We practically cannot do Balanchine," Vishneva said to Mason. "You dance till you drop.") She also had the musical responsiveness that is required for Balanchine, and which is not a hallmark of Russian dancing. Some people therefore described her as a soubrette, a perky-miss type. This was not an unreasonable conclusion; it was how her company was casting her. But her new "Giselle" should put the lie to that. Her versatility is huge. So is her scale. She has the hundred-and-eighty-degree extension that ballerinas, worldwide, now cultivate, but she uses it for *dance* purposes—to carve the air, broaden the arc—rather than for the merely visual purpose, so strange and fundamentally vulgar, of raising the foot to the ear. Also, she has the celebrated Kirov back. When she turns around, you can see all the movement emanating from the lumbar spine. But you don't have to see it. Always, you can feel that generator working, and this gives the movement force and unity, which read as spiritual qualities—the body as soul.

Diana Vishneva, of A.B.T. and the Kirov, has reinterpreted the role of Giselle. Photograph by Sylvia Plachy.

A.B.T. right now is a great mystery. The dancing could not be better. Night after night, the company's principal dancers, above all, the men—Corella, José Manuel Carreño, Carlos Acosta, Herman Cornejo, Marcelo Gomes, David Hallberg—put in performances full of conviction, nuance,



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and pizzazz. That's not to mention the soloists and corps members (Erica Cornejo, Sascha Radetsky, Jesús Pastor, Adrienne Schulte, and many others), who, however small their roles, cut them like diamonds. In "Giselle," you look down the line of Giselle's "friends," basically her backup crew, and suddenly your eye stops. There is a new young person, Caity Seither—I had to ask someone her name—dancing as if this were her last night on earth. It is to see such performances that one goes to A.B.T.

But often one sees them in silly ballets. For the annual spring season at the Metropolitan Opera House, Kevin McKenzie, the company's artistic director, seems to feel that he must always provide a new full-evening narrative ballet, with splashy sets and a plummy old score, to please A.B.T.'s largely conservative subscribers. So this season we got a "Cinderella" by James Kudelka, of the National Ballet of Canada, that looked as though he had made it with a gun to his head. He may have. This piece was created in 2004 for NBC, of which, at that point, Kudelka was the artistic director; NBC, too, has conservative subscribers. Kudelka introduced a few revisionist touches—Cinderella as tomboy, etc.—but he didn't seem to care about them any more than he cared about the traditional elements of the story. Ten years ago, A.B.T. gave us a "Cinderella" by Ben Stevenson, at that time the artistic director of Houston Ballet. It was no better. Good ballet choreographers are in short supply these days, not to speak of good choreographers interested in making big story ballets. (I can think of exactly one, Mark Morris, whose "Sylvia" will be given its New York première by San Francisco Ballet later this month, at the Lincoln Center Festival.) Still, it is discouraging to see A.B.T.'s director go shopping every year at outlying companies for another three-acter to throw to his audience.

I have a solution to propose—not for McKenzie but for ballet fans. Go to A.B.T.'s three-week fall season, at City Center, rather than its long spring season, at the Met. The tickets are cheaper, and you get to sit closer to the stage. The international superstars, like Vishneva, sometimes don't show up for the City Center gig, but without them A.B.T. looks more like a unified company, working toward a common goal. Most important is the fact that McKenzie seems to view the fall season as the sideshow, the "fringe" show. In other words, we don't have to sit through those boring three-act ballets. This is not to say that all the one-acters presented in the fall are interesting, but many of them are. Last autumn, the company presented a clutch of early-twentieth-century works—"Rodeo," "The Green Table," "Dark Elegies"—that I do not think any troupe has done better within the past two decades. "The Green Table," Kurt Jooss's great antiwar ballet of 1932, was the sensation of the season, as it should have been, in view of David Hallberg's tremendous performance as Death. Hallberg may have been chosen for this role partly just because of his size (he is six feet two), but he found umpteen ways to be your death: cruel and kind, sudden and slow, courtly and bug-squashing. Equally moving, however, was "Dark Elegies." The company hadn't performed this 1937 Antony Tudor classic in fifteen years. The whole cast was dancing it for the first time, and everyone labored to get the tone right: grieving but austere. (The ballet is set to Mahler's "Kindertotenlieder," or "Songs on the Death of Children," and though it has no story, it is clearly about a community in mourning.) In the opening section, Michele Wiles, a big blonde who is normally a cheerleader type, led the ensemble. You could see her thinking, working, to put this difficult ballet over, and—forget the dead children—her effort made the show inexpressibly poignant. I guess everyone worked as hard in "Cinderella," but some ballets can't be put over, because there's nothing there to put over. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Chaska (Minn.) Herald.

A man passed out on the banks of Courthouse Lake attracted the attention of local police in the early morning hours on Jan. 14.

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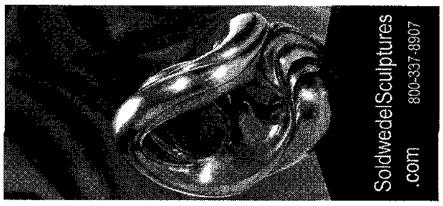
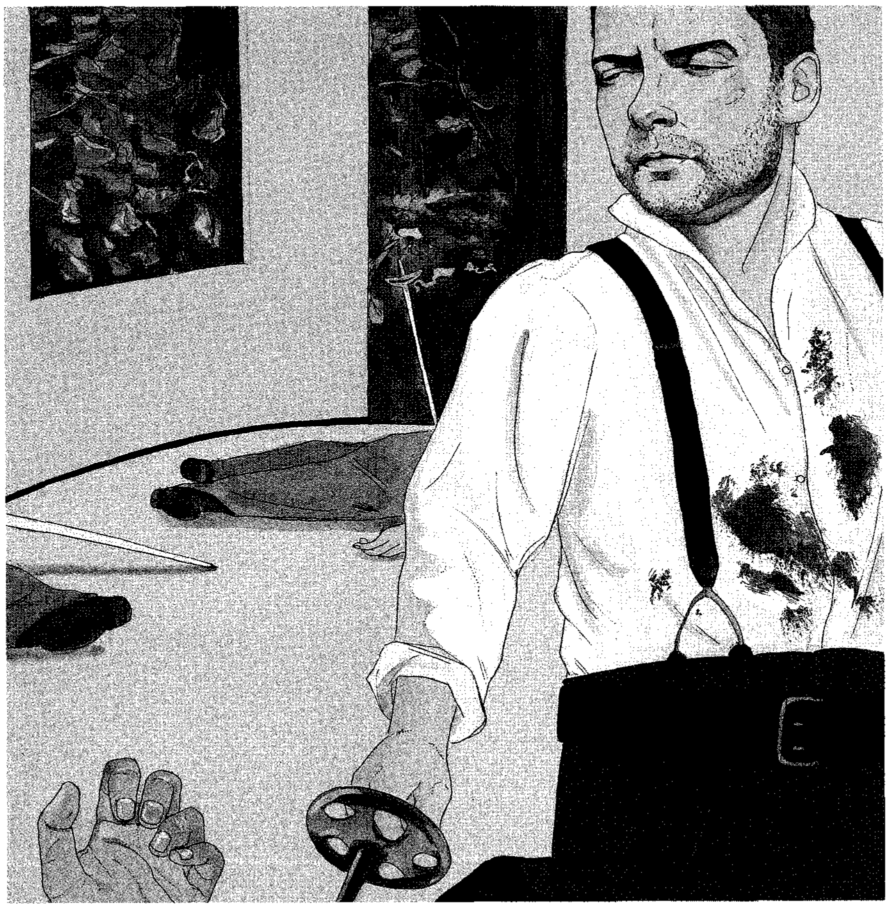


THE THEATRE

UNSEXED

Gender studies in "Macbeth" and a reimagined Proust.

BY HILTON ALS



Liev Schreiber shows the whimper behind the swagger in Macbeth.

LARA TOMLIN

The evil that men do is nothing without an audience to witness it. The dictator works the crowd in order to see his power in action. The rapist gets off on the panic in his victim's eyes. For the smilers with knives, there is no "I" without the spectator whom they forcibly seize and then abandon, blood marking the spot.

Blood punctuates so many of the melancholy, twisted events in Shakespeare's "Macbeth" (now in a Public Theatre production at the Delacorte) that it's as much a character in the play as the fantastical and potent Weird Sisters. And, like those creatures, who are "So withered and so wild in their attire / They look not like th' inhabitants o' the' earth / And yet are on't," the blood that Macbeth spills in his pursuit of power speaks of and to his ultimately unconquerable guilt, his inevitable haunting. "Blood will have blood," Macbeth (Liev Schreiber) announces to his wife (Jennifer Ehle) as they sit through the night contemplating their joint wrongdoings. This conflicted, nefarious pair aren't especially interested in shedding light on their dark souls, however; each is as self-absorbed and shortsighted as the other. Instead, they struggle to cast off all moral consciousness. But even Macbeth knows that his night visions can't be shut out; for this "secret'st man of blood," darkness draws truth to the surface.

As it happens, nowhere in "Macbeth" is blood blood. That is, family is nothing but a collection of false loyalties that can be realigned or wiped away in an instant. And it is the idea of the Macbeths as a fractured political family that the prodigiously gifted director, Moisés Kaufman, plumbs again and again here—that, and the notion of what constitutes the masculine and the feminine. These themes have preoccupied Kaufman for some time. As the writer and director of "Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde" (1997) and "The Laramie Project" (2000), and the director of Doug Wright's 2004 Pulitzer Prize-winning play "I Am My Own Wife," Kaufman made it clear that his intellectual interests lie in "queer" culture's reinterpretations of male and female.

In Ehle, he has a willing collaborator. At the start of the play, Lady Macbeth receives a letter that her husband, a legendarily fierce Scottish general, has sent from the front, where he has helped save Scotland from a hostile takeover by the King of Norway. Macbeth tells her of the Weird Sisters' prophecy that he will one day be king. As she reads, Lady Macbeth finds herself dreaming of the blood yet to be spilled—of the rivers that will flow if only she can guide Macbeth to power. The blood that will stain her husband's hands is less offensive to her than her own menstrual blood—the symbol of her femininity. "Unsex me here, / And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full / Of direst cruelty!" she says. "Make thick my blood; / Stop up th'access and passage to remorse, / That no compunctious visitings of nature / Shake my fell purpose."

While delivering this speech, Ehle runs her fingers lightly up and down her midsection, in order to make it clear to us that she is speaking of Lady Macbeth's womb. This graphic, almost cartoonish gesture passes in a flash. And yet it manages to stick in the viewer's mind, if only because of its awkward charm: Ehle's interpretation of the role stresses not Lady Macbeth's cold focus but her odd vulnerability. Dressed like a nineteen-fifties sitcom mom—her skirts are big and full, her blond curls clean and tight—Ehle is the very image of sweetness. As Elizabeth Bennet in the 1995 BBC version of "Pride and Prejudice," and as the star of István Szabó's underrated 1999 film "Sunshine," she projected a similar flowerlike tender-ness. While Ehle's Lady Macbeth is a stretch—and an act of defiance against the standard casting of the role—you root for her, if only because Kaufman is rooting for her, too. Rather than downplaying Ehle's decency and beauty, he folds that honey into Lady Macbeth's malevolence and bile. Ehle, in the role, becomes the kind of old-fashioned woman who is happy to step back and pass the canapés because she knows she's got her husband by the balls.

Schreiber, too, is a delightfully able experimentalist. With his broad chest and his long legs, he may look like a modern-day matinée idol, but he knows enough about difference (he grew up on Manhattan's Lower East Side) to understand that it's more fun to explore the role than to rely on his formidable technique and star wattage alone. Where Kaufman makes Ehle look stereotypically feminine, he turns the sullenly masculine Macbeth into a yielding, emotional character, who bows before his wife's superior intelligence. When Macbeth returns home from the front, Lady Macbeth gets to work on him with a speed and efficiency that make his head spin. Although he constantly questions his own motives for pursuing power through murder, he almost never questions his wife's. He wouldn't. He's whipped—as she says, "too full o' the milk of human kindness." And in his internal defeat—the whimper behind the swagger—he relies on her to set his ambition in motion. Is she his wife? His bossy older sister? His mother? Whenever he is crushed by doubt, Schreiber's Macbeth looks as if he were about to burst into tears—or hide behind his wife's skirts.

Schreiber is a father figure here, of course, but he is a boy in a gold-plated crown, as well—a weak and troubled man who would be nothing without his Nancy Reagan. He also defines the production's distinctly American tone. (The references to Iraq in Kaufman's staging cannot be ignored.) Whenever reflection or weariness gets the better of him, he sits slightly slumped in his chair, like a ventriloquist's dummy—waiting for Lady Macbeth to supply the words for his feelings. This she does—especially when, in Act II, anticipating the conflicts between thought and action in all that is to come, she says, "Th' attempt, and not the deed, / Confounds us."

When, in 1913, a young woman from the French provinces named Céleste Albaret went to work as a maid and a companion to a certain Marcel Proust, everyday life—eggs for breakfast and fireside chats—ended for the practical-minded twenty-one-year-old. Over the next nine years, as Proust struggled to complete his masterwork, Albaret administered coffee and devised a method of gluing the writer's lengthy revisions to his proof pages. She also provided her employer with a maternal link to the world, from which he had detached himself years before, the better to get on with the business of living through his work.

After Proust's death, in 1922, Albaret was besieged by biographers, scholars, and Proustophiles, all of whom wanted clues to his last years. Albaret decided to write a memoir of her own, in part to silence the critics. Published in 1973, "Monsieur Proust" is a remarkable evocation of the spiritual sacrifices and flashes of grace that inform genius and those who serve it. In 1981, the German director Percy Adlon made "Céleste," a film based on the memoir, which remains a triumph of the adaptive form. Adlon extracts a performance from Eva Mattes, in the title role, that is true to the book while amplifying all that Albaret didn't say. In "Céleste," Mattes does not act—she simply *is*. Mary Beth Peil, on the other hand, prefers to act up a storm. Her performance in Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of Albaret's book, along with several other texts—a one-woman show entitled "M. Proust" (at Steppenwolf, in Chicago)—is a nightmare of self-regard. Dressed in black, with her hair pulled back and her lips pursed, Peil enters the stage, presses the record button on a tape deck, and begins to tell her side of the story—stridently. But whom is she talking to? A critic? A nosy journalist? With whom is she arguing? It's hard to say, because her hostility never feels justified; it's something she has put on, like her dark pantyhose. Her peevish voice, and her impatience with the various interpretations of Proust's work, is such a negative force that you feel like closing your eyes on this sour performance and recalling instead Albaret's lovely prose, which was what inspired you to see the show in the first place. ♦

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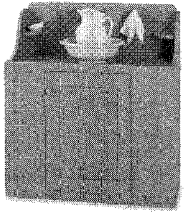

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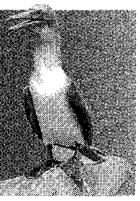

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ON TELEVISION

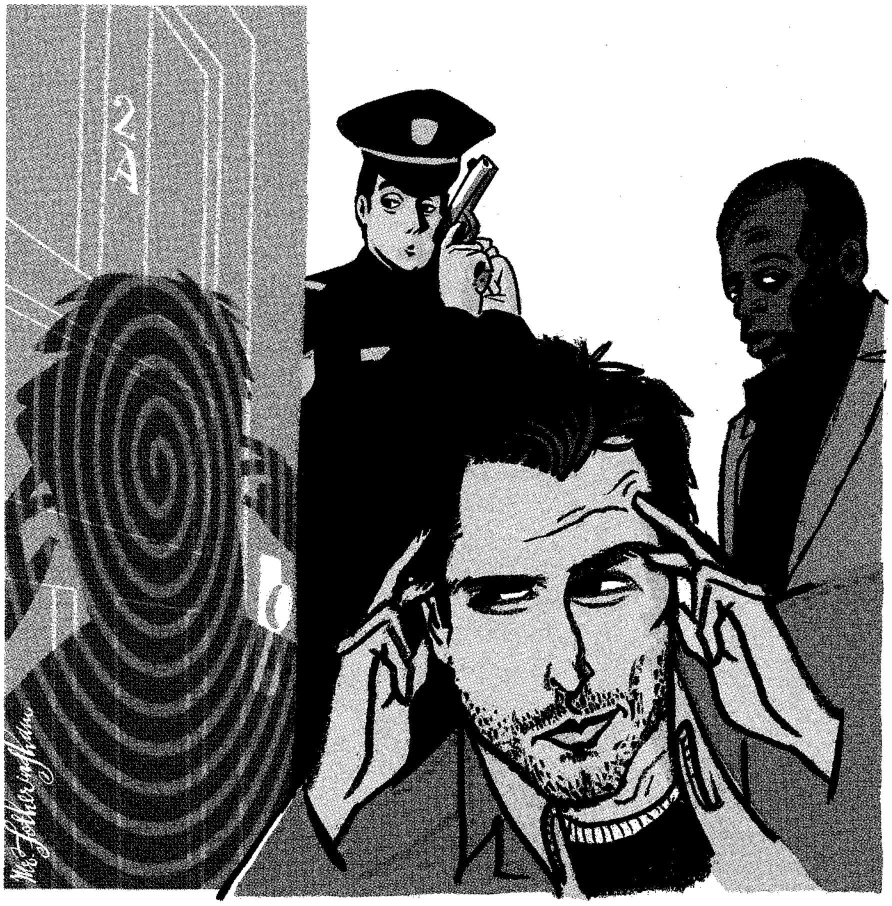
BOY DETECTIVE

A police poseur on "Psych."

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

Now, more than ever, Friday night is behavior-disorder night on the USA Network. For the past four years, there's been "Monk," whose main character, Adrian Monk (Tony Shalhoub), is a brilliant detective who has been on leave from the San Francisco police force since his wife was murdered and some of his tics and habits and eccentricities flowered into a full-blown obsessive-compulsive disorder. And, starting this Friday (after the première of the new season of "Monk"), we have "Psych," a show about the wacky crime-solving adventures and personal misadventures of Shawn Spencer (James Roday), a Santa Barbara policeman's son who is immature, distractable, and impulsive, and who, though he's only in his late twenties, has had—and lost—fifty-seven jobs since he graduated from high school. O.C.D. and A.D.D.: there's a good reason that USA's branding motto is "Characters welcome." (The madness continues on Sunday nights, with back-to-back paranormality: "The 4400," about a group of forty-four hundred people who were abducted from Earth over the course of years and are one day returned here, en masse, and "The Dead Zone," in which Anthony Michael Hall comes out of a six-year coma with the gift of second sight.)

"Psych" is, in a sense, Son of "Monk"; both shows revolve around characters whose past rules tyrannically over their present and both try to squeeze comedy from their situations. "Monk," which, in addition to Shalhoub, has a wonderful supporting cast, is often very touching, whereas "Psych" is, for the most part, merely jokey. Shawn's father, Henry (Corbin Bernsen), now retired from the force, groomed him for detective work from early childhood. In the third episode, we see a flashback of Shawn when he was seven, playing detective by himself, pretending to shadow a perp. His father, watching him, criticizes his technique. The dispirited Shawn says, "I was just playing." Henry, exasperated, shoots back, "Well, play right, Shawn. Or don't play at all." That kind of attitude will put a damper on a person's development; in Shawn's case, this means that later in life when his friend Gus (Dulé Hill), a responsible pharmaceutical salesman, teases him about having had so many jobs, he says, "Yes, I have, and they were all fun." Shawn plays all the time—but, wouldn't you know it, he also turns out to be an absolute ace at detective work. Take that, Dad.



Mind games: James Roday as a phony psychic for the Santa Barbara police force.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

In the opening scene of the series, while the two are at a diner, Henry quizzes young Shawn on the details of their surroundings—how many people are wearing hats, which letter in the exit light is burned out, and so on. The waitress suggests that he'll be a detective when he grows up. "I'm never going to grow up," he says. In the next scene—twenty years later—he's making out with a waitress on his couch with the TV on, and solves a crime just by watching the story on the local news and noticing details in the picture. He immediately calls the police to tell them, and inadvertently becomes a suspect himself. For some reason, he decides to use the bogus explanation that he's a psychic. The series flows from that premise, and what also flows is our sense that there is something wrong with Shawn that is unacknowledged by the show's producers, many of whom also have other works of whimsy and preposterousness on their résumés, such as "Ed," "Boston Public," and "Picket Fences." (The show's creator, Steve Franks, wrote the Adam Sandler movie "Big Daddy.") Shawn is both in your face and completely absent as a human being. His puckishness verges on the pathological, calling to mind Jim Carrey’s more manic creations, as well as the title character of “Ed,” whose quixotic and supposedly amusing attempt to win over a woman was a grating case of narcissism without charm.

Once Shawn has presented himself as a psychic, he has to play the part. When “visions” come to him, he thrashes around the way Carrey did in the courthouse-bathroom scene in “Liar, Liar,” and when a police detective chides him for not being serious enough—for acting as though helping the police were like being a kid in a candy store—Shawn, channelling the deadpan looniness of Ace Ventura, says, “Let me be honest with you, Detective. I used to work in a candy store, and it’s nothing like this.” But Roday doesn’t quite have the chops to back up his Carreyisms. Shawn is a first-draft version of Jason Lee’s title character in “My Name Is Earl”—a lovable goof, but with little ability to gain traction in your heart.

“Brotherhood,” a new drama on Showtime on Sunday nights, is almost a parody of itself. It’s about the struggles between two brothers in Providence, Rhode Island, one of them a state representative and the other a lifelong criminal, who shows up after seven years in hiding. But watch out—slippery gray areas ahead. The politician, Tommy Caffee (Jason Clarke), is no saint (this is the legendarily corrupt Rhode Island, after all), and his thuggish brother, Michael (Jason Isaacs), has a yearning for redemption. Well, if you stab a woman fifty-four times, you’re going to spend a lot of time yearning for redemption. Comes with the territory. Both Tommy and Michael are fiercely loyal to the Hill, the fictional working-class Irish neighborhood where they grew up and still live, and fiercely loyal to their ma, Rose, who works at “the mill,” plays bingo, is herself fiercely loyal to her sons, and is played by the fiercely Irish actress Fionnula Flanagan.

“Brotherhood” is a heavy stew, with chunks of “The Sopranos” floating in it, and it reeks of stage Irishness. After Michael has beaten a waiter at a seafood joint because he thinks the recipe for the breading for the stuffed clams has been changed, his mother tells Michael’s young niece, “Your uncle has been cursed with a volatile nature. But deep down in his heart he is the best of men.” Bless this show, Father, for it is blarney. ♦

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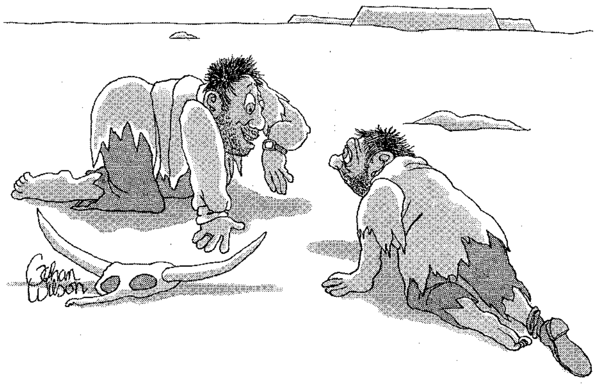
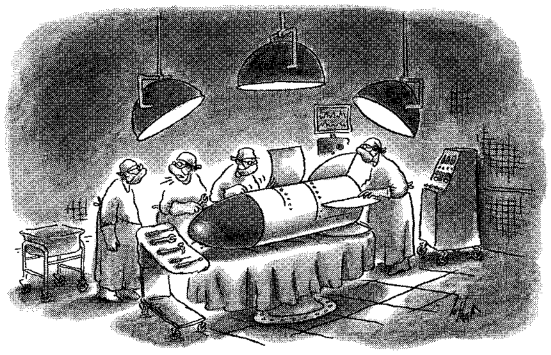
CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Leo Cullum, must be received by Sunday, July 16th. Finalists in the June 26th contest appear below; go online to vote. We will announce the winner, along with the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 31st issue. The winner will be given a signed print of the cartoon. Any U.S. resident age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit www.newyorker.com/captioncontest.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"And, best of all, it's completely waterproof."
Damien Licata, Keene, N.H.



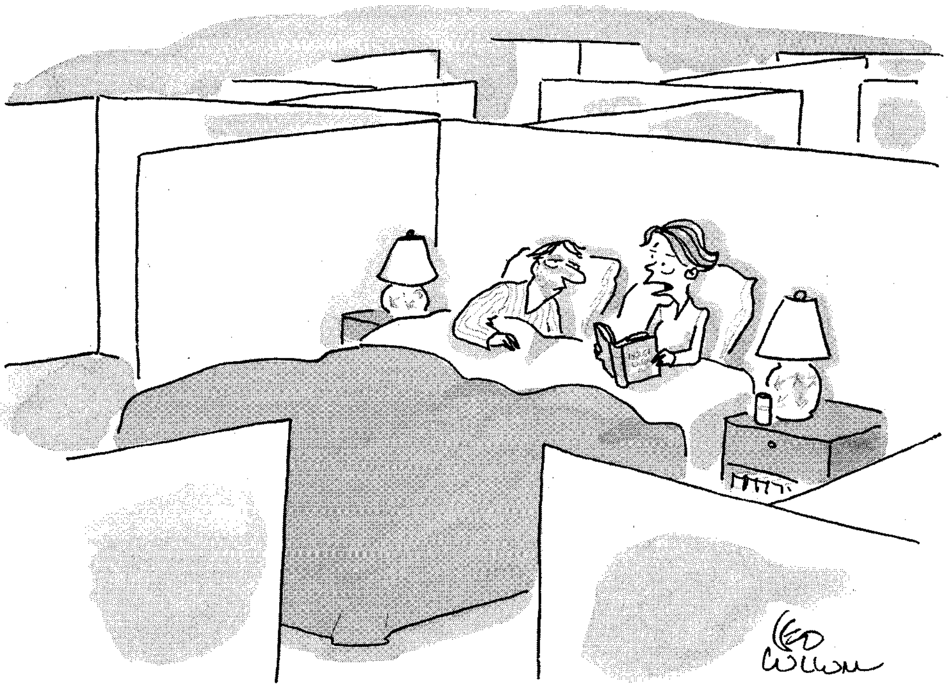
THE FINALISTS

"Damn it, I'm a brain surgeon, not a rocket scientist!"
Richard Haspel, Brookline, Mass.

"We thought it would look better with big breasts."
Peter Orazem, Ames, Iowa

"It's the worst case of projectile dysfunction I've ever seen."
Jack Deitch, Austin, Texas

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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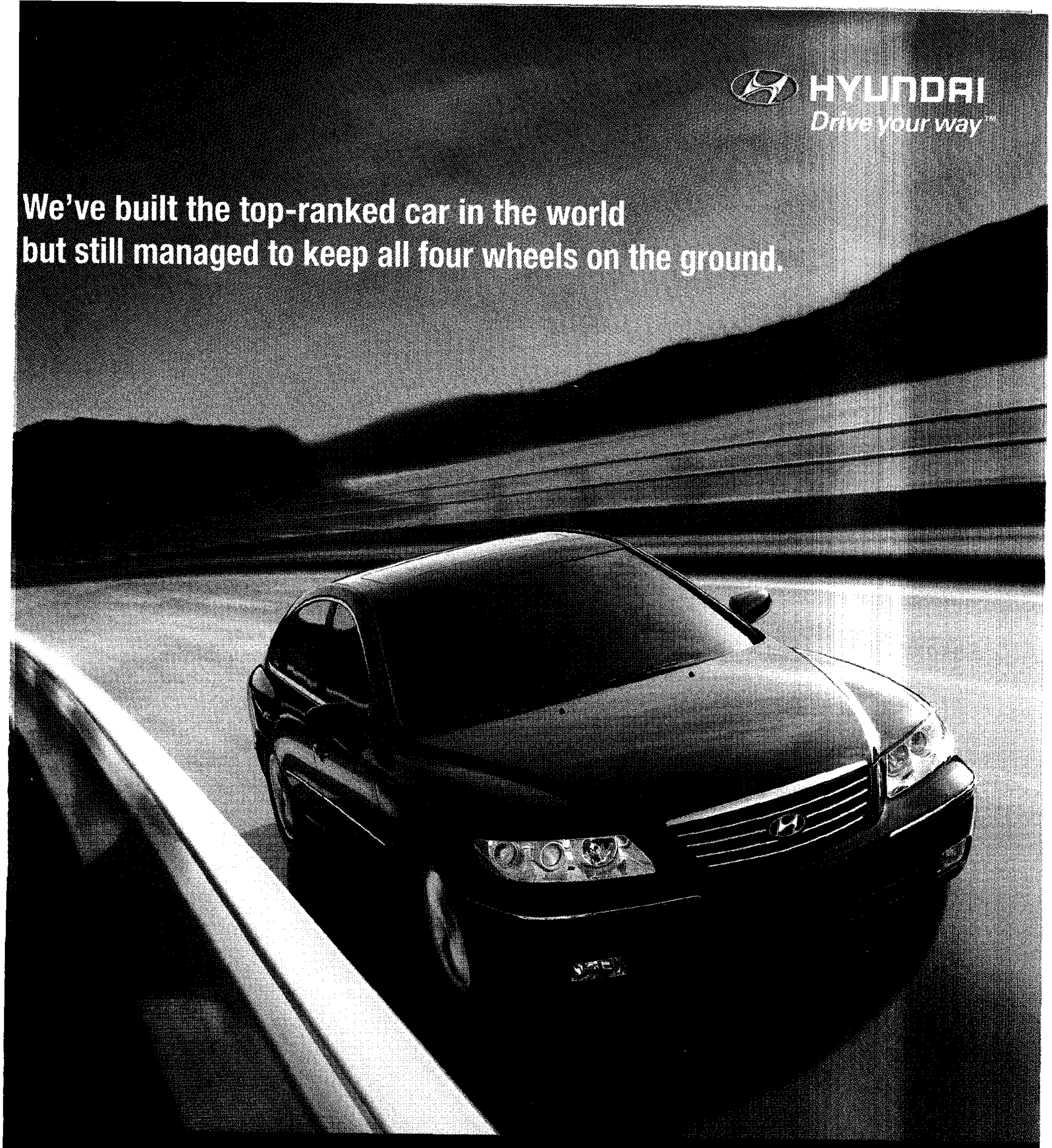

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